

**1Chronicles 23:1 ¶** So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

**1Chronicles 23:2** And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.

David was at the end of his life when he made Solomon king over Israel. He gathered together all the leaders of Israel along with the priests and Levites.

I would presume this to be saying that we are about to read in the rest of this record is all that David did in preparation for Solomon becoming king. He wanted to have everything organized and ready for implementation upon the completion of construction of the temple.

**1Chronicles 23:3** Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward: and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand.

**1Chronicles 23:4** Of which, twenty and four thousand *were* to set forward the work of the house of the LORD; and six thousand *were* officers and judges:

**1Chronicles 23:5** Moreover four thousand *were* porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, *said David*, to praise *therewith*.

They counted the number of Levite men from the age of 30 and older, and the total came to 38,000. They were assigned work in the temple as follows:

- 24,000 were assigned to do the work required in maintaining the temple
- 6,000 were officers and judges – Guzik notes: “Governmental records, decisions, and administration were all in the hands of the Levites.”
- 4,000 were porters – These men controlled entrance to the temple.
- 4,000 were musicians

It’s interesting to note that David is credited with making the instruments that the Levites would use.

**1Chronicles 23:6** And David divided them into courses among the sons of Levi, *namely*, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

David separated the sons of Levi into three groups according to their families as descended from Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

**1Chronicles 23:7** Of the Gershonites *were*, Laadan, and Shimei.

**1Chronicles 23:8** The sons of Laadan; the chief *was* Jehiel, and Zetham, and Joel, three.

**1Chronicles 23:9** The sons of Shimei; Shelomith, and Haziel, and Haran, three. These *were* the chief of the fathers of Laadan.

**1Chronicles 23:10** And the sons of Shimei *were*, Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four *were* the sons of Shimei.

**1Chronicles 23:11** And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second: but Jeush and Beriah had not many sons; therefore they were in one reckoning,

according to *their* father's house.

This section lists the leaders among the Gershonites according to their lineage.

**1Chronicles 23:12** The sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four.

**1Chronicles 23:13** The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses: and Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever.

**1Chronicles 23:14** Now *concerning* Moses the man of God, his sons were named of the tribe of Levi.

**1Chronicles 23:15** The sons of Moses *were*, Gershom, and Eliezer.

**1Chronicles 23:16** Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel *was* the chief.

**1Chronicles 23:17** And the sons of Eliezer *were*, Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many.

**1Chronicles 23:18** Of the sons of Izhar; Shelomith the chief.

**1Chronicles 23:19** Of the sons of Hebron; Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.

**1Chronicles 23:20** Of the sons of Uzziel; Michah the first, and Jesiah the second.

This section lists the leaders among the descendants of Kohath according to their lineage. It is noted that this was the family to which Moses and Aaron belonged. It is also noted that Aaron and his sons were singled out to serve as priests before the LORD. The priests had a special responsibility to maintain purity and holiness in service before the LORD as they represented Him to the people.

**1Chronicles 23:21** The sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. The sons of Mahli; Eleazar, and Kish.

**1Chronicles 23:22** And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but daughters: and their brethren the sons of Kish took them.

**1Chronicles 23:23** The sons of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three.

This section lists the leaders among the descendants of Merari according to their lineage.

**1Chronicles 23:24** ¶ These *were* the sons of Levi after the house of their fathers; *even* the chief of the fathers, as they were counted by number of names by their polls, that did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and upward.

**1Chronicles 23:25** For David said, The LORD God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever:

**1Chronicles 23:26** And also unto the Levites; they shall no *more* carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof.

The wording here is a bit confusing to me. The reference here is to the number of Levites that were age 20 and older; prior verses reference those 30 and older.

David declared that since the LORD God of Israel had given his people rest in their own land, the Levites were no longer needed to serve in the transport of

the tabernacle and its vessels.

**1Chronicles 23:27** For by the last words of David the Levites *were* numbered from twenty years old and above:

**1Chronicles 23:28** Because their office *was* to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God;

**1Chronicles 23:29** Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for *that which is baked* in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size;

**1Chronicles 23:30** And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even;

**1Chronicles 23:31** And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD:

This section sheds light on the above verses; it seems to indicate that David ordered a new numbering of those that were 20 years and older. Their duties were to serve the priests, the sons of Aaron, in purifying all the holy things and performing the required ongoing work that was part of temple service. They were in charge of baking the showbread, preparing the meat offerings and offering thanks and praise to the LORD both at the morning and evening sacrifices. They were to assist as required as the priests made burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and during the new moon and feasts as designated by the LORD.

**1Chronicles 23:32** And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy *place*, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

Several commentators make a connection with this verse and Numbers 18, declaring it to emphasize that the Levites were to serve the priests as detailed under God's established instructions concerning the specific functions of priest and their Levite helpers.

*Numbers 18:1–6 “And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.”*