

David Organizes Israel's Army; Recognition of Various Leaders

1 Chronicles 27

1 Chronicles 27:1-15 - *“And the children of Israel, according to their number, the heads of fathers' houses, the captains of thousands and hundreds and their officers, served the king in every matter of the military divisions. These divisions came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division having twenty-four thousand.*

² *Over the first division for the first month was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel, and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ³ He was of the children of Perez, and the chief of all the captains of the army for the first month. ⁴ Over the division of the second month was Dodai an Ahohite, and of his division Mikloth also was the leader; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁵ The third captain of the army for the third month was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was chief; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁶ This was the Benaiah who was mighty among the thirty, and was over the thirty; in his division was Ammizabad his son. ⁷ The fourth captain for the fourth month was Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁸ The fifth captain for the fifth month was Shamhuth the Izrahite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁹ The sixth captain for the sixth month was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁰ The seventh captain for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹¹ The eighth captain for the eighth month was Sibbechai the Hushathite, of the Zarahites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹² The ninth captain for the ninth month was Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjamites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹³ The tenth captain for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarahites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁴ The eleventh captain for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁵ The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; in his division were twenty-four thousand.”*

Background Notes

1 Chronicles 23-26 described how David's organized the Levites as he prepared for proper worship of the Lord when his son Solomon would build the Temple. In chapter 23 the Levites were numbered. Chapter 24 was the dividing of the Levites into twenty-four groups. In chapter 25, certain Levites were assigned to take charge of the Temple music. In chapter 26 Levites were appointed to guard the Temple gates, and some would be responsible to guard the Temple treasures. The Levites who would be scattered throughout the nation to administer the affairs of God and the king were listed.

In the first part of chapter 27, the topic moves from David's organization of the Levites to the organization of Israel's military. In the second part of the chapter the leaders of the twelve tribes and some administrators and advisors within the kingdom were officially recognized. All these responsibilities have spiritual parallels in the Lord's kingdom today. There's a wide variety of ways for believers to serve in the church or in Christian ministry today.

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers can serve as apologists.

David's standing army consisted of 288,000 men. He divided them into twelve divisions of 24,000 men each. Each division would serve for one month per year. All the division commanders were "mighty men of David" (also listed in chapter 11). These military divisions were responsible for maintaining law and order, as well as defending the nation.

I think we can already see the parallel between the responsibility of the military divisions to defend God's people in the nation of Israel, and the responsibility of believers today to defend the faith. In fact, a Christian apologist is one who defends the Christian faith. Believers can serve as apologists.

1 Peter 3:15 says, *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give the defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."* The Greek word used for "answer" or "defense" here is *apologia*, the word from which we get "apologetics." 1 Peter 3:15 says that all believers are responsible to defend the faith. All of us should be ready with an answer when we're asked about our faith. But some Christians are called to serve the Lord specifically in the field of apologetics. Praise God for the great apologists who have defended the faith down through the history of the Church!

The Word of God and biblical faith are under attack today as never before. Good apologists are badly needed. If you start an apologetics website, you'll get feedback from around the world! Believers can serve as apologists.

2. Believers can serve as authorities.

1 Chronicles 27:16-24 - *"Over the tribes of Israel: the officer over the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri; over the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; Maachah;¹⁷ over the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; over the Aaronites, Zadok over Judah; Elihu, one of David's brothers; over Issachar, Omri the son of Michael;¹⁹ over Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; over Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel;²⁰ over the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; over the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah;²¹ over the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; over Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner;²² over Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel.*

²³ But David did not take the number of those twenty years old and under, because the LORD had said He would multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens. ²⁴ Joab the son of Zeruiah began a census, but he did not finish, for wrath came upon Israel because of this census; nor was the number recorded in the account of the chronicles of King David.”

David’s sinful census and God’s resulting discipline were recorded in chapter 21. The tribes of Gad and Asher are not mentioned in verses 16-24, but Levi and the entire tribe of Manasseh are mentioned. Twelve officials were recognized as authorities over their respective tribes.

Do you see the spiritual parallel for our doctrinal point? Some believers are called by God to be spiritual authorities in the church - not to gain selfish power and prestige, but as shepherds. Church leaders should be recognized as spiritual authorities. *“Obey those who rule over you and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief...” (Hebrews 13:17).* Desiring to be a leader and shepherd is a good goal - **if it’s for the right reasons!** 1 Timothy 3:1 says, *“... if a man desires the position of an elder, he desires a good work.”* This is an area of significant Christian service. Believers can serve as authorities.

3. Believers can serve as administrators.

1 Chronicles 27:25-31 - *“And Azmaveth the son of Adiel was over the king’s treasuries; and Jehonathan the son of Uzziah was over the storehouses in the field, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses. ²⁶ Ezri the son of Chelub was over those who did the work of the field for tilling the ground. ²⁷ And Shimei the Ramathite was over the vineyards, and Zabdi the Shiphmite was over the produce of the vineyards for the supply of wine. ²⁸ Baal-Hanan the Gederite was over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the lowlands, and Joash was over the store of oil. ²⁹ And Shitrai the Sharonite was over the herds that fed in Sharon, and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over the herds that were in the valleys. ³⁰ Obil the Ishmaelite was over the camels, Jehdeiah the Meronothite was over the donkeys, ³¹ and Jaziz the Hagrite was over the flocks. All these were the officials over King David’s property.”*

These verses tell us that all the specific areas in David’s kingdom were under the control of capable administrators - even to someone in charge of tilling the ground (ve26)! Capable administrators are greatly needed today. There are all kinds of jobs for capable administrators in areas of responsibility within the church and within Christian ministries - for example, folks who can administer the repair of church or ministry vehicles - and that’s just one needy area. 1 Corinthians 12:4-5 says, *“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.”* So besides spiritual gifts, there are many other areas where you can use your natural talents and abilities. Believers can serve as administrators.

4. Believers can serve as advisors.

1 Chronicles 27:32-34 - *“Also Jehonathan, David’s uncle, was a counselor, a wise man, and a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king’s sons. ³³ Ahithophel was the king’s counselor, and Hushai the Archite was the king’s companion. ³⁴ After Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, then Abiathar. And the general of the king’s army was Joab.”*

David’s personal counselors and advisors are mentioned in these verses. Counselors and advisors are needed today - not to counsel or advise the Lord, but to give the Lord’s counsel to the Lord’s people and church leaders. Good advisors are very much needed!

Believers can serve as advisors. But don’t be an Ahithophel! Although Ahithophel was the king’s counselor, he turned traitor against David during Absalom’s rebellion, and had to be replaced. Be like Hushai, the king’s companion. Hushai was a David’s advisor and his good friend. Read about Hushai’s good counsel in 2 Samuel 15. *“Where there is no counsel, the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors, there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14).* Good counselors are valuable, and believers can serve as advisors.

You may not be an “upfront” leader, but maybe the Lord has given you insight and wisdom, and you can give good advice to church leaders. I’m so glad of the good advice counselors have given me when I had to make important ministry decisions! Believers can serve as advisors.

Practical Application

Use the internet to defend the Christian faith!

Under our first Doctrinal Point we said, “If you start an apologetics website, you’ll get feedback from around the world!” It’s true! One of my former students is doing that very thing. He started a website, www.christianevidences.com - and he hears from people around the world. He is defending the Christian faith worldwide – and you could do that, too!

But you may say, “I don’t know enough apologetics, and I don’t know anything about creating websites.” I can almost guarantee you have at least one friend who can help you build a website. And you can find all the apologetics you need on the internet or in good books. In your website you can provide links to various other websites that help believers, and start a worldwide witness. Use the internet to defend the Christian faith!