

# 1 Chronicles 10-12 – Chapter Study

## INTRO

### I. Genealogies (1 Chr. 1-9)

### II. The Reign of David (10-29)

#### ***A. Background: the Death of Saul (10)***

Before we dive into the text, want to lay the story of Chronicles in its historical context.

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Following the conquest of Canaan & the death of Joshua, the leadership of Israel divided up among the elders of the tribes.

There was no central government or capital.

The tabernacle had been set up at Shiloh & there the people were to go 3 times a year to worship on the feast days.

But there was nothing else that united the tribes.

In fact, the tribes resisted uniting.

The leaders of the tribes & clans of Israel were jealous of their power & had little concern for what happened outside the boundaries of their territory.

The problem is, Israel's neighbors saw this disunity & knew they could take advantage of it.

Weakness provokes aggression.

So during the period of the Judges, which was right before the time of the Monarchy, Israel faced aggression from 3 main sources.

The Canaanites who'd been defeated by Joshua regrouped & reasserted themselves to retake parts of the land.

The Philistines who lay on the western border were an imperialistic people looking to expand their territory.

The Midianites were a nomadic group who lived in the east whose main interest was not in laying claim to territory so much as just raiding Israelite towns.

During the time of the judges, the Israelites saw the importance of uniting & following a dynamic leader.

A movement began to form a government more like the nations around them.

They demanded a king from Samuel, of the last judges.

Samuel tried to dissuade them from their course.

Their problem, he said, was not that they lacked a king, but that they refused to honor God as their Sovereign.

Still they pressed him; so he warned them about all the hard things having a human king would bring.

They didn't care about all that.

So Samuel anointed Saul the son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin, who was the epitome of what the people were looking for.

Saul was tall, strong, good-looking. He had a commanding appearance.

And at the first, he was a humble man who acknowledged his personal ineptitude at a task that was bigger than him.

But Saul is a classic lesson in the truth that power corrupts.

Though he started out well, instead of depending on God, he thought he could grow into his role as king through experience & his own ability to adapt.

At first he was timid of authority.

Then he grew accustomed to it.

That turned into a comfort with power.

Comfort morphed into arrogance, which became envy & paranoia.

Saul's refusal to lean of God was manifested time & again in his choices to rule by what was politically expedient & popular, instead of doing what God had clearly commanded.

After several failures, God told the now elderly prophet Samuel that He had rejected Saul & revoke his reign.

Israel had had the kind of king they wanted & he had failed miserably.

Now God would give them a king by His choosing.

He would be a man who would do what was right in the sight of God regardless of how popular it made him in public opinion polls. That man was David.

At God's bidding, Samuel went to Bethlehem where he found David, the son of Jesse & anointed him as king.

Even though David was young, only in his mid-teens, God favored him & brought him to the attention of the nation.

When Saul realized God had passed him over and chosen David to take his place, he tried to kill him.

But God protected David, even though he had to run for his life & lived in exile for several years.

Eventually, the way to the throne became clear – as the events of ch. 10 reveal.

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### **1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.**

Throughout Saul's reign, there was fighting between the Philistines & Israel.

Israel had a few victories & the Philistines recognized the need to stage an all-out campaign to crush Saul & his new army once & for all.

What assured Saul's defeat was David's defection to the enemy's side.

David had been Saul's most effective general in earlier victories against the Philistines.

But with Saul's attempts to kill him out of envy, David & his supporters had gone over to one of the Philistine kings.

Fearing David would turn on them in the middle of battle, the Philistines refused to allow him to join in this assault on Saul's forces.

The Philistines had always had difficulty in attacking the Israelites directly from the west as they had to fight uphill against forces that were dug in behind solid fortifications.

So on this campaign they marched their army north along the coast to the region of Carmel, then out onto the plain of Jezreel.

Their objective was to gain access to the central highland from the plain, then move south, thus flanking Saul's forces.

Word was brought to Saul of the Philistines' movement so he hurried his force north to try & block them.

They met at Mt. Gilboa which lies at the junction of the Valley of Jezreel & the central highlands.

The battle went badly for Israel & many men were slain.

### **2 Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3 The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.**

When Saul knew the battle was lost & capture was imminent, wounded & unable to make an escape, he ordered his armor-bearer to finish him off.

But that would be regicide – even if it was an order, so the man refused to obey.

Saul feared the humiliation & torture that would certainly follow his capture, so he committed suicide.

**5 And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died.**

**6 So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together.**

Though Saul had other relatives, none of them were capable of taking the crown, so the throne was left vacant.

**7 And when all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; then the Philistines came and dwelt in them.**

When the Israelites living in the region realized the army of Israel had been vanquished, they fled.

They knew it wouldn't be long before the Philistines & their Canaanite allies would be along to assert control. Chances of surviving their raids were slim.

**8 So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.**

Standard practice after battle was to loot the victims.

There was always much treasure to be found on the bodies of the vanquished, besides all of the arms they could collect & use for fitting out even more troops.

As the Philistines looted the battlefield, they came across the bodies of Saul & his sons.

It was obvious by their armor who they were.

**9 And they stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among the people.**

Word of Saul's death & the end of his dynasty was big news in Philistia.

With David as one of their allies, there was no one left to lead Israel which meant the Philistines could continue to push their border even farther east.

**10 Then they put his armor in the temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.**

In Samuel we learn this was at the city of Beth Shean – which is one of my favorite sites in Israel.

Beth Shean was an important fortress city that lay at the junction of the Jezreel & Jordan valleys.

It had been a Philistine outpost for some time.

**11 And when all Jabesh Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons; and they brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.**

Though Jabesh Gilead was on the eastern side of the Jordan & in territory that had been over-run by the Midianites & Ammorites, the people of the city felt a strong loyalty to Saul.

When his early days as king many years before, his very first military campaign was to liberate Jabesh Gilead.

So these people loved Saul. Their grief at his death was severe.

The outrage of nailing his headless body to the wall of Beth Shean was too much so they staged a night raid & recovered his body along with the bodies of his sons & returned to their city where they cremated & buried them.

**13 So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. 14 But he did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.**

Saul's defeat & death were the judgment of God for Saul's obstinate rebellion.

It wasn't as if Saul had misunderstood what he was supposed to do.

Samuel had made it crystal to Saul what he was to do.

But time & again, Saul had disobeyed, knowing what he was doing was forbidden.

What capped it was his going to see a medium on the even of his final battle.

Saul knew such trafficking with the occult was evil!

He'd even given a command earlier in his reign that all such practitioners of the occult were to be executed.

But yet – he consulted with one who'd managed to survive.

This was nothing less than a high-handed rejection of God and one that as the leader of the people could not go unanswered.

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With Saul & his sons out of the way, the way to the throne was now clear for David.

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### **B. David's Rise (11-20)**

Before we pick up the story of David, let's take a quick look at what was happening around Israel.

EGYPT out of which the Israelites had come 400 years before & which had been the dominant power in the ancient Middle East till this time, was in a time of internal weakness.

The kingdom had split into 2 with the brand new 21st dynasty controlling the north from their new capital at Tanis.

In the south was a confederation of generals & priests who ruled at Thebes.

It was just before this that the Egyptians had defeated an invasion by the Sea Peoples who instead moved further north & took up residence along the coast of Canaan & Lebanon.

The ASSYRIANS, who'd earlier been conquered by the Hittites began to once again assert themselves by throwing off the last bits of Hittite control.

With the removal of Egyptian & Hittite influences in the Middle East, the smaller local people began to assert themselves.

Philistines – Israelites – Arameans (Syria) – Phoenicians (Tyre)

#### **1. David established in Jerusalem; his heroes (11-12)**

**1 Then all Israel came together to David at Hebron, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. 2 Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the Lord your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over My people Israel.' " 3 Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel.**

Ezra, the author of Chronicles, leaves out a lot of the detail given to us in Samuel & Kings.

After Saul's death, David's own tribe of Judah made him king in Saul's place but the other tribes refused to acknowledge him.

Abner, Saul's lead general, tried to rally the nation behind Saul's son Ishbosheth.

But Ishbosheth wasn't fit to rule & the tribes were slow in supporting him.

In spite of that, there was fighting between David's supporters & Abner who managed to hang on to what was left of Saul's army.

Abner had the short of it and soon surrendered to David but was assassinated before he could join forces.

After 7 years without a ruler, the other tribes went to David at his capitol at Hebron & pledged their loyalty to him.

They acknowledged that God had anointed & appointed David to be king as Samuel had made clear.

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Also, throughout Saul's reign, it had really been David who had done the most for the nation. Knowing Israel needed a capital that was more centrally located than Hebron, David moved north.

**4 And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land.**

Jerusalem was a city which had remained unconquered by the Israelites.

The Jebusites who controlled the city were one of the many little tribes that comprised the Canaanites. They'd been able to hold out against Israel because of Jerusalem's location.

It was built on a mountain ridge that could only be approached from one side, the north.

There they had built an effective fortification that could withstand nearly any siege.

So the Israelites had left it alone.

Jerusalem lay at the junction of an important road that ran East/West & connected the coast with the Jordan Valley & the rich fields around Jericho, & another road that ran North/South along the central highlands.

This N/S road was the third most important route between Egypt & Mesopotamia.

The Via Maris, Way of the Sea was the most important.

Running a close second was the King's Highway which ran along the Jordan Valley.

These 2 routes connected in the Jordan Valley just east of Beth Shean.

The third most important route ran along the center of the central plateau.

Jerusalem lay at the crossroads of these 2 important routes.

Whoever controlled Jerusalem controlled all of the commerce that came through here – & there was a LOT of it!

Jerusalem was also in a kind of no-man's land on the borders of several tribes.

So by making it the capital, David would be showing favoritism to none.

**5 But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).**

When David & his forces showed up, the Jebusites were so confident in their fortifications, they mocked him.

As history has shown time & again, such confidence was foolish.

David did take the city – here's how . . .

**6 Now David said, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and became chief.**

From hints in other places we can safely conclude that through careful observation, Joab discovered that the Jebusites were getting their water through a secret tunnel.

He located it, broke into it, then with a small band of soldiers, scaled the shaft & entered the city covertly.

They opened the city gates & the rest of the force was able to enter & subdue the city.

True to his word, David then made Joab his lead general.

**7 Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the City of David. 8 And he built the city around it, from the Millo to the surrounding area. Joab repaired the rest of the city.**

David was an architectural genius.

He knew as the capital of the nation Jerusalem would need to be much larger than the geography of the area would allow, so he filled in some of the gullies with a retaining wall & terrace type structure. This allowed for more building to be built inside the city walls.

As the military leader, Joab expanded the city's defensive fortifications that had been damaged in the city's conquest.

**9 So David went on and became great, and the Lord of hosts was with him.**

We spent an entire Sunday on this verse 2 weeks ago.

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Now Ezra gives us a list of David's chief supporters & military captains.

These were called David's "mighty men of valor."

For the most part they were guys who'd allied with David when he was on the run from Saul.

For a while David had taken refuge in a wild no-man's land where there was a large cave called Adullam.

While he was there, people who were distressed, in debt & disappointed came to him & threw in their lot with him.

David's ready acceptance of them, along with his resolute trust in God, forged what was otherwise a rag-tag group of abject losers into an heroic band of brothers who accomplished amazing things.

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Though Ezra leaves out so much from the story, he lists David's mighty men because his aim is to encourage the people who've returned from exile in Babylon.

He wants them to know it doesn't matter what their past holds – Faith in God can transform a life & turn crushed victims into glorious victors.

**10 Now these were the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the Lord concerning Israel. 11 And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam the son of a Hachmonite, chief of the captains; he had lifted up his spear against 300, killed by him at one time.**

In 2 Samuel 23, 37 mighty men are given by name.

30 of them were regular mighty men.

Then there were 2 sets of 3 who were special, one set of 3 a little more outstanding than the other.

Joab surpassed them all, rounding out the 37.

First among the major 3 was this guy Jashobeam who in one battle killed 300 guys!

Listen, this was in the day when there were no machine guns or weapons of mass destruction.

Battle was up close & personal; you looked into the eyes of the man you offed.

Spears were as often used as a thrusting weapon as thrown.

Jashobeam had developed a technique with his spear that was nothing less than amazing.

**12 After him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the 3 mighty men. 13 He was with David at Pasdammim. Now there the Philistines were gathered for battle, and there was a piece of ground full of barley. So the people fled from the Philistines. 14 But they stationed themselves in the middle of that field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the Lord brought about a great victory.**

We looked at this last Sunday.

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Shammah, the 3rd mighty man who filled out the chief 3 isn't mentioned here but is in 2 Sam 23.

**15 Now 3 of the 30 chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the army of the Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim.**

This is the 2nd group of 3.

This story took place while David was hiding out from Saul.

The Philistines had managed to take possession of several places deep inside Israelite territory, including David's hometown of Bethlehem.

**16 David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 17 And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!"**

One day as David was just sitting around, he happened to mention how he longed for a drink of the fresh, cool water that was found in the well of his home.

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It was a casual remark, no suggestion at all. David wasn't hinting at anything.

He was merely remarking on what a drag it was that he was stuck in the cave of Adullam with it's less than stellar water supply when if Saul wasn't such a jealous fool, he & his men could be helping Israel drive the Philistines from their homes & fields.

But these 3 guys heard David's casual remark & out of love for & devotion to him, they decided to go get him that drink of water.

**18 So the 3 broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David.**

It was just a bucket of water. These guys knew it wasn't anything David needed.

They did this as sort of lark, a clever way to show David how loyal they were.

David saw something very different.

As they ran up with the water, they bore the appearance of men who'd just been in battle.

They'd risked their lives – for what??? For some stupid water! Because he'd made a flippant remark.

In that instant David realized just how serious this business of being called & anointed by God to reign was.

God had given him a special gift of charisma & gravitas.

Men & women were so devoted to David, they were willing to die, even for a glass of water.

The reality of that hit him like a ton of bricks.

He realized the power he had – & unlike Saul, instead of it corrupting him, he trembled.

He was humbled, shaken to the core with the awesome responsibility that was his as king.

**Nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord.**

He would not because he could not drink it.

If he had, it would only have encouraged others to even more foolish acts.

By pouring out the water, he admitted his error in not being more careful about what he allowed to come out of his mouth.

Something everyone in a position of authority ought to remember.

**19 And he said, "Far be it from me, O my God, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men who have put their lives in jeopardy? For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the 3 mighty men. 20 Abishai the brother of Joab was chief of another 3. He had lifted up his spear against 300 men, killed them, and won a name among these 3. 21 Of the 3 he was more honored than the other 2 men. Therefore he became their captain. However he did not attain to the first 3.**

Abishai was the brother of Joab. He was the chief of the 3 guys who made the raid on Bethlehem to get David's water.

**22 Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He [Benaiah] had killed 2 lion-like heroes of Moab.**

They were fierce men, mighty warriors.

**He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day.**

Lions were a problem in ancient Israel because they ravaged flocks & herds & would occasionally attack travelers.

So people trapped them by digging deep, steep-walled pits & putting a live goat in the bottom.

A lion would jump down to get the goat, but then be unable to climb out.

Benaiah decided to take on one of these trapped lions & killed it!

What made it all the more interesting is that he did it on a cold winter's day when even normal fighting was tough

**23 And he killed an Egyptian, a man of great height, 5 cubits tall [7½ ft.]. In the Egyptian's hand there was a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 24 These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among 3 mighty men. 25 Indeed he was more honored than the 30, but he did not attain to the first 3. And David appointed him over his guard.**

Using his own staff like a weapon, Benaiah managed to strip the Egyptian of his spear, then used it to kill him.

This giant was likely a mercenary like Goliath who'd hired himself on with Israel's enemies.

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From the account of these mighty men of David's we know they were incredibly skilled warriors.

They weren't just brawlers who ran pell-mell into battle.

They were champions of both hand to hand combat & fighting with various weapons.

We'd call them high-degree black or red belts in martial arts.

David was surrounded with ancient versions of Bruce Lee, Jason Statham, Chuck Norris, Jean Claude Van Damme, Jet Li, & Steven Seagal.

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In vs. 26-47, 48 names are given.

This includes the original 30 mighty men who came to David at Adullam & formed the core of his elite guard, plus those who rose to positions of prominence after he became king.

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David was great in so many ways. One of the most important was his ability to bring out the best in others.

These men, each & every one of them was heroic.

They were standouts, not only in combat but in leading other men.

This trait is rare but common among those leaders who stand head & shoulders above their peers.

Alexander had it. Hannibal had it. Julius Caesar had it. Kublai Khan had it.

George Washington had it to an amazing degree.

But David was greater than them all in his ability to stir up in those around him an earnest desire & ability to become great.

But as great as David was, he only foreshadowed his descendant Jesus Who's turned not dozens but millions of misfit & failures into heroic & virtuous mighty men & women of valor.

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You want to know the character & ability of a leader – Look at the people around them.

Consider what influence they have on that leader & what influence he/she has had on them.

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**1 Now these were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers in the war, 2 armed with bows, using both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows with the bow. They were of Benjamin, Saul's brethren.**

When David fled Israel & signed up with the Philistines, he was given the city of Ziklag as his base of operations.

While he was there, a bunch of guys from Saul's own tribe came over to him.

At the very time when Saul ought to have been boosting the size of his army, he was foolishly alienating people.

And these guys who came over to David were expertly skilled warriors.

They were one of the most important part of any military force in that time –archers.

They were so skilled they had developed the talent of being ambidextrous. [Orange fights]

In vs. 3-7 the Benjamites who joined David at Ziklag are named.

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**8 Some Gadites joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as gazelles on the mountains:**

Their names are given in vs. 10-13

Gad was one of the tribes that had settled in the eastern side of the Jordan.

Several of their most skilled warriors joined David while he was at the cave of Adullam.

Guys like this were perfect for reconnaissance.

**14 These were from the sons of Gad, captains of the army; the least was over a hundred, and the greatest was over a thousand. 15 These are the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks; and they put to flight all those in the valleys, to the east and to the west.**

Before these Gadites joined up with David, they cleared some of the passes near their territory of all the non-Israelites who lived there.

**16 Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the stronghold. 17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since there is no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look and bring judgment." 18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, and he said: "We are yours, O David; We are on your side, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, And peace to your helpers! For your God helps you." So David received them, and made them captains of the troop.**

David had been betrayed 4 times before by the people among whom he'd taken refuge so he was being cautious.

This huge force showed up one day & David met them with a question – had they come to ally themselves with him or to oppose him.

BECAUSE David was low, the Spirit moved Amasai, their leader, to encourage David with these warm words.

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There's an important lesson to glean from this little story.

Often times when we're down, depressed, discouraged, we pray & ask God for help.

But instead of waiting on Him to answer, if it doesn't come immediately, we set out to cheer or distract ourselves.

Turn on the tube, climb on the internet, play a video or computer game, go to the show, drive over to a "friend's", hoist a few brews, down a pill, light up a Zigzag.

David had Ziklag, we have Zigzag.

We need help & pray – but when the answer doesn't come right away we take out a loan or borrow from relatives & friends.

I wonder how many times we've shut ourselves off from the blessing of God because failed to wait on HIS answer.

God knew David needed encouragement & sent him Amasai, who ended up being a lot more than just encouragement – he permanently boosted David's base of loyal supporters.

Our God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above anything we can ask or think, it says in Eph 3:20.

**19 And some from Manasseh defected to David when he was going with the Philistines to battle against Saul; but they did not help them, for the lords of the Philistines sent him away by agreement, saying, "He may defect to his master Saul and endanger our heads."**

The Philistine march north along the coast when they made their way to the final battle with Saul went right thru the territory of Manasseh.

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A group came out to pledge their loyalty to David.

When the Philistines told David to return home, these guys went with him.

**20 When he went to Ziklag, those of Manasseh who defected to him were Adnah, Jozabad, Jediahel, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of the thousands who were from Manasseh. 21 And they helped David against the bands of raiders, for they were all mighty men of valor, and they were captains in the army.**

While David maintained a base at Ziklag, he led his men out on several forays against the nomadic peoples who made raids over Israel's southern border.

**22 For at that time they came to David day by day to help him, until it was a great army, like the army of God.**

The last couple years of Saul's reign were marked by widespread discontent in Israel.

He kept losing ground to the Philistines & kept making bad decisions.

He'd spent the last half of his political career trying to curry the public's favor, so disobeying God.

The very thing he'd aimed at, he lost.

Leaders have to lead based on principle, not a desire to be popular.

Saul, aiming to be popular, lost people by the hundreds & thousands to David who never tried to be popular.

He was a man of deep & abiding principle.

He wasn't perfect; far from it.

But when he did err, principle moved him to confess & repent and make things right.

**23 Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord:**

**24 of the sons of Judah bearing shield and spear, 6,800 armed for war;**

**25 of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor fit for war, 7,100;**

**26 of the sons of Levi 4,600;**

**27 Jehoiada, the leader of the Aaronites, and with him 3,700;**

**28 Zadok, a young man, a valiant warrior, and from his father's house 22 captains;**

**29 of the sons of Benjamin, relatives of Saul, 3,000 (until then the greatest part of them had remained loyal to the house of Saul);**

**30 of the sons of Ephraim 20,800, mighty men of valor, famous men throughout their father's house;**

**31 of the half-tribe of Manasseh 18,000, who were designated by name to come and make David king;**

**32 of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were 200; and all their brethren were at their command;**

**33 of Zebulun there were 50,000 who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks;**

**34 of Naphtali 1,000 captains, and with them 37,000 with shield and spear;**

**35 of the Danites who could keep battle formation, 28,600;**

**36 of Asher, those who could go out to war, able to keep battle formation, 40,000;**

**37 of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, from the other side of the Jordan, 120,000 armed for battle with every kind of weapon of war.**

**38 All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king. 39 And they were there with David 3 days, eating and drinking, for their brethren**

had prepared for them. **40 Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen—provisions of flour and cakes of figs and cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for there was joy in Israel.**

It took a while for the entire nation to unite behind David, but once they did, they realized it was the right thing to do and broke out in celebration.

David had already amply proven himself. Though he was still relatively young, for years he'd shown himself to be incredibly capable as a leader & warrior.

He possessed a remarkable amount of wisdom.

He also had a knack for putting people in exactly the right spot to maximize their talents.

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## CONCLUSION

As we end tonight, there's a couple things I want to note.

First, is the emphasis here on the how well ordered the army of Israel was.

They marched & fought in ranks – they kept formation.

What's remarkable about that is that this just wasn't the way most warfare at that time was engaged in.

Usually it was just 2 opposing forces who rushed each other and went at it.

The winner was whoever sent the other army into retreat.

The idea of sending your troops into battle in ordered ranks with different soldiers having different duties was a brand new idea and David was one of the first to incorporate it into his military strategy.

It's one of the reasons why Israel became THE dominant kingdom in the Middle East during that time.

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Second, take a closer look at v. 32 –

**32 of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were 200.**

In the midst of listing the military troops that became part of Israel's army under David, we're told about 200 elders of Issachar who had a unique ability.

They understood the times & what course the people of God ought to take.

We know from other passages that even though David possessed his own large dose of wisdom, he also relied on the counsel of other sharp people.

That in itself is a mark of wisdom – that you search out the counsel of others who can give good counsel.

Just as David assembled a powerful army of skilled warriors, he also assembled a bevy of skilled counselors.

These men of Issachar were the core.

Oh that God would surround our leaders with men & women of wise counsel; people who understand the times & what we ought to be about.