

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 12

This chapter gives an account of those that came to David at different times, and joined and assisted him both before the death of Saul, and when persecuted by him, and after he was made king of Judah in Hebron, and before he was king of all Israel, in order to it; of the Benjaminites that came to him when at Ziklag, (^{<3120>}1 Chronicles 12:1-7) of the Gadites that came to him when in the hold, (^{<3128>}1 Chronicles 12:8-15) of some of Judah and Benjamin, who came to him in the same place, (^{<3126>}1 Chronicles 12:16-18), and of the Manassites at the time he came with the Philistines against Saul, (^{<3129>}1 Chronicles 12:19-22) and the number of the several tribes are given, that came to him at Hebron to make him king over all Israel, (^{<3123>}1 Chronicles 12:23-40).

Ver. 1. *Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag*, etc.] Given him by Achish to live in, when he fled from Saul, (^{<3276>}1 Samuel 27:6)

while he yet kept himself close, because of Saul the son of Kish; when he was an exile from his own country, and obliged to live retired in a foreign one, because of Saul's persecution of him, and seeking to take away his life:

and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war; not against Saul, with whom David had none, but with the Amalekites, and others, (^{<3278>}1 Samuel 27:8 30:16,17).

Ver. 2. *They were armed with bows*, etc.] Much used in war in those times:

and could use both the right hand and the left, in hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of a bow; they were ambidextrous; who could sling stones, or shoot arrows, with either, which was no small advantage to them:

even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin; they were of the tribe of Benjamin, of which Saul was, and so his brethren; and they might be, at least some of them, his relations and kinsmen; who observing the unreasonableness of

Saul's enmity to David, and detesting his cruelty, and sensible of the innocence of David, and of the service he had done his country; and perhaps not being ignorant of his divine right and title to the kingdom, went over to him, to comfort, strengthen, and assist him.

Ver. 3. *The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite*, etc.] Who was of Gibeah, in the tribe of Benjamin, sometimes called Gibeah of Benjamin, and of Saul, it being his birthplace, (see ^{<0910>}1 Samuel 11:4 13:1) and so these might be some of his kindred:

and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; there is one of this name in the posterity of Jonathan, (^{<0386>}1 Chronicles 8:36) who might be so called after some of his relations:

and Berachah, and Jehu the Anethothite; or Anethothite, as the Vulgate Latin version, who was of Anathoth, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, the native place of Jeremiah the prophet.

Ver. 4. *And Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty*, etc.] That came with him, and he had the command of; this man was of Gibeon, another city in the tribe of Benjamin, (^{<0685>}Joshua 18:25)

and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Josabad, the Gederathite; one of Gederah, a city in the tribe of Judah, perhaps on the borders of that and Benjamin; Joram speaks of it as belonging to the country of the city Aelia or Jerusalem.

Ver. 5. *Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite*.] A native of Haruph or Hariph, (see ^{<0724>}Nehemiah 7:24).

Ver. 6. *Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites*.] Not Korahites, descendants of Levi, (^{<0309>}1 Chronicles 9:19), but the posterity of Korah a Benjaminite.

Ver. 7. *And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor*.] A city in the tribe of Judah, (^{<0658>}Joshua 15:58) and might now belong to Benjamin; or this was another city of the same name in that tribe.

Ver. 8. *And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David, into the hold to the wilderness*, etc.] Men of the tribe of Gad, who lived on the other side Jordan; these separated themselves from the rest of their tribe,

from their families and dwellings, and from the government of Saul, and came over to David, and joined him either when he was in some strong hold in the wilderness of Ziph, or Maon, (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 23:14,24,25), or, as some think, when he was at Ziklag, in the hold there, said to be in the wilderness of Judah:

men of might, and men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler; warlike, valiant, and courageous men, well skilled in military discipline: whose faces were like the face of lions; bold, stern, and fierce. The philosopher observes ^{f77}, that of all creatures the lion most resembles a man, having a great mouth, a square face and forehead, large eye brows, etc.

and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains; which are remarkable for their swiftness on the mountains, (see ~~2~~ Song of Solomon 2:17 8:14). Aelianus ^{f78} speaks of one sort of them that run as swift as a tempest. These Gadites, as with their undaunted looks and courage, intimidated their enemies, and put them to flight, so they were swift to pursue them, and overtake them.

Ver. 9-13. *Ezer the first*, etc.] This, and those that follow, are the names of the Gadites given, according to their age, or merit, or order in coming to David: Obadiah, Eliab, Mishmannah, Jeremiah, Attai, Eliel, Johanan, Elzabad, Jeremiah, Machbanai; in all eleven.

Ver. 14. *These were of the sons of Gad, captains of the host*, etc.] Of the militia in their own country, and of the men they brought with them; or they were such afterwards in David's army:

one of the least was over one hundred, and the greatest over thousand; not that they were so when they came, or brought over such a number of men with them under their command; but they were promoted by David, when he came to the throne, to be centurions and chiliarchs; according to Jarchi, the sense is, that the least of them would put to flight and pursue one hundred, and the greatest of them 1000, and so fulfilled the passage in (~~4~~ Leviticus 26:8).

Ver. 15. *These are they that went over Jordan in the first month*, etc.] The month Nisan or Ab; as they must come over Jordan to come to David, since they dwelt on the other side of it:

when it had overflown all its banks; as it did at this time of the year, (see ^{<BRIS>}Joshua 3:15) which is observed to show both the time of the year when they came over, and their zeal and ardour to assist David, and their boldness and intrepidity; fearless of danger, they threw themselves into Jordan, and swam over it, in all probability when the waters of it were so deep they could not ford it, and so rapid that they were in danger of being carried away with them:

and they put to flight all them of the valleys, both towards the east, and towards the west; who dwelt in the valleys, or plains of Jordan east and west; who seeing a number of men come over, took them for enemies, and fled, so Kimchi; or, as others think, these were the Philistines, who, on the defeat of Saul, took possession of the cities of Israel, in the valleys forsaken by them, (^{<BRIS>}1 Samuel 31:7) or rather these were the Moabites or Arabs, who made incursions into the land of Israel for prey, the Gadites met with, when they came over Jordan.

Ver. 16. *And there came of the men of Benjamin, and of Judah,* etc.]

Besides those before mentioned, (^{<BRIS>}1 Chronicles 12:2),

to the hold unto David; the same as in (^{<BRIS>}1 Chronicles 12:8).

Ver. 17. *And David went out to meet them,* etc.] Out of the hold where he was; either out of respect and deference to them, some of them being persons of eminence; or it may be out of suspicion, fearing they were not his friends, being, it may be, chiefly of the tribe of Benjamin, and therefore was desirous of sounding them before he admitted them:

and said unto them, if ye be come peaceably unto me to help me; if they were come with a good will to him, and intention to help him against his enemy, and protect him:

mine heart shall be knit unto you; they should have such a share in his affections, that their hearts would be as one, as his and Jonathan's were, (^{<BRIS>}1 Samuel 18:1),

but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies; into the hands of Saul, and his courtiers, that sought his life:

seeing there is no wrong in mine hands; no injury done by him to Saul, or to them, or to any other:

the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it; he that sees all things, let him revenge it; and it is not only a wish that he would, but a prayer of faith that so it would be.

Ver. 18. *Then the spirit came upon Amasai*, etc.] Or “clothed”^{f79} him; a spirit of fortitude, as the Targum, of strength, courage, and presence of mind, with which he was endowed, covered, and clothed as with a garment; this was a sister’s son of David’s, (see ~~1075~~ 2 Samuel 17:25)

who was chief of the captains; of them that came at this time with him to David; he was afterwards Absalom’s general, and designed to be David’s, but was murdered by Joab:

and he said, thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; which being spoken in this short and concise manner, as the supplement shows, denotes the vehemency with which he spake, and is expressive of their cordial fidelity to him, and their resolution to abide by him at all events:

peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; wishing all prosperity, temporal and spiritual, to him and all his confederates and auxiliaries, among whom they reckoned themselves:

for thy God helpeth thee; which they perceived by the remarkable deliverances of him out of the hand of Saul, when in imminent danger; the Targum is,

“for the Word of the Lord is for thy help:”

then David received them; into the hold, and admitted them as his friends:

and made them the captains of the band; they brought with them; or in later times, when he came to the throne.

Ver. 19. *And there fell some of Manasseh to David*, etc.] Of the tribe of Manasseh; they took his part, and on his side, and joined him:

when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle; which was a strong proof of their cordial attachment to him:

but they helped them not: the Philistines; neither David nor his men, nor the Manassites that joined them:

for the lords of the Philistines, upon advisement; counsel taken among themselves: sent him away; that is, David and his men:

saying, he will fall to his master Saul, to the jeopardy of our heads; meaning, that he would go off with his troops to Saul, and betray them into his hands, and with their heads make his peace with him, (see ~~1024~~ 1 Samuel 29:4).

Ver. 20. *As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh,* etc.] Others besides the former, who joined him when he went with the Philistines; these joined him when he was dismissed from them, and was returning to Ziklag: namely,

Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jedaiel, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that were of Manasseh; that tribe being, as the rest were, divided into hundreds and thousands; these were captains over the thousands of the militia of the tribe.

Ver. 21. *And they helped David against the band of the rovers,* etc.] The Amalekites, who, while he was gone with the Philistines, had seized on Ziklag, and burnt it, and carried the women captive, with what spoil they could make; these coming to David thus opportunely, assisted him in his pursuit and defeat of them:

for they were all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the host; or army of David.

Ver. 22. *For at that time, day by day, there came to David to help him,* etc.] Particularly after the defeat of Saul by the Philistines, unto the time that David came to Hebron:

until it was a great host, like the host of God; the heavenly host, the angels; so the Targum.

Ver. 23-37. *And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war,* etc.] That were trained up to it, and accounted for it:

and came to David to Hebron; after the death of Ishbosheth and Abner, and when David had reigned seven years in Hebron:

to turn the kingdom of Saul to him; to transfer it to him and his family:

according to the word of the Lord; by Samuel, which they were acquainted with; and the number of those of the children of Judah, who made him their king already, and so there was the less need of a numerous appearance of them, were 6800 armed men, (~~1324~~ 1 Chronicles 12:24), of the tribe of

Simeon, valiant men, 7100, (^{<13125>}1 Chronicles 12:25), of the children of Levi 4600, (^{<13125>}1 Chronicles 12:26), of the Aaronites or priests, with Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, according to Jarchi and Kimchi, at the head of them, 3700, (^{<13127>}1 Chronicles 12:27), besides Zadok, a young man of the line of Eleazar, who was made high priest in the time of Solomon, who brought with him twenty two captains, (^{<13128>}1 Chronicles 12:28) the heads of the courses of the priests, which were afterwards twenty four, (^{<13104>}1 Chronicles 24:4) of the tribe of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, the greatest part of whom had been sticklers for the continuance of the kingdom in the family of Saul, 3000, (^{<13129>}1 Chronicles 12:29), of the tribe of Ephraim, valiant men, 20,800, (^{<13120>}1 Chronicles 12:30), of the half tribe of Manasseh on this side Jordan, whose names were pricked down, being given, to make David king, 18,000, (^{<13121>}1 Chronicles 12:31), and of the tribe of Issachar, two hundred of the heads of them; men of knowledge and understanding, either in chronology or astrology, or in the proper seasons for husbandry, or for the fixing the beginning of years and months, and the intercalation of them, for keeping the several festivals; or rather were men of prudence and wisdom, and knew that this was the proper time for making David king, Ishbosheth and Abner his general being dead; and as they were men in high esteem for their parts and abilities, their brethren were at their beck and command, (^{<13120>}1 Chronicles 12:30), and of the tribe of Zebulun, warlike men, skilful in war, and well armed, 50,000 men; and their numerous appearance showed that they were hearty and sincere, being the greatest number of all the tribes, (^{<13123>}1 Chronicles 12:33), and of the tribe of Naphtali, 1000 captains, and with them armed men, 37,000, (^{<13124>}1 Chronicles 12:34) and of the tribe of Dan, men skilled in war, 28,600, (^{<13125>}1 Chronicles 12:35) and of the tribe of Asher, warlike men, 40,000, (^{<13125>}1 Chronicles 12:36) and of the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, military men, well armed, 120,000, (^{<13127>}1 Chronicles 12:37), which in all made 348,800 men, and upwards.

Ver. 38. *All these men of war that could keep rank*, etc.] Well disciplined men:

came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David king over Israel; they were all of one mind, and quite hearty and sincere in fixing David on the throne of all Israel:

and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart also to make David king; those who came not were of the same mind; it was the unanimous voice of the people that he should be their king.

Ver. 39. *And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking,* etc.] Keeping a festival, to testify their joy on this occasion:

for their brethren had prepared for them; not the inhabitants of Hebron only, but all the country round about, brought in provisions on this joyful occasion; otherwise the men of Hebron would not have been able to have provided what was sufficient for such a vast number, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 40. *Moreover, they that were nigh,* etc.] To Hebron, or bordered on the tribe of Judah:

even unto Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali; as far as to those tribes, and including them:

brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules; all which were creatures used to carry burdens:

and on oxen; who, though commonly employed in ploughing, yet, on this occasion, might be made use of either in drawing wagons laden with provisions, such as follow, or in carrying loads on their backs; though, as Tully^{f80} observes, their backs show they were not formed to receive and carry burdens:

and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly, that is, food made of flour, pastries, besides bread, before mentioned, with dried figs, pressed and made into cakes, and clusters of grapes dried, and of liquids, wine and oil, which make cheerful, and beef and mutton in great plenty:

for there was joy in Israel; that their civil wars were ended; that they were united into one kingdom again; and had a king over them according to their hearts' desire, the darling of the people, of whom they had raised expectations; being a valiant, prudent, and good man, who studied the good both of church and state, and, above all, was one of God's choosing, appointing, and anointing: greater joy there will be, when David's son and antitype, Zion's King, reigns, when he shall be King over all the earth, and

there will be one Lord, and his name one, (~~1970~~ Psalm 97:1 ~~2517~~ Isaiah 52:7
~~3849~~ Zechariah 14:9 ~~6115~~ Revelation 11:15-17).