

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 27

In this chapter we have an account of twelve military courses, or twelve legions of soldiers, with the captains of them, that served David monthly in their turns, (^{<1370>}1 Chronicles 27:1-15) and of the princes of the several tribes, (^{<1376>}1 Chronicles 27:16-24) and of his economical rulers, (^{<1375>}1 Chronicles 27:25-31), and of his counsellors and general, (^{<1372>}1 Chronicles 27:32-34).

Ver. 1. *Now the children of Israel after their number*, etc.] Not the whole body of the people, but the militia of the nation; for after the account of the division of the priests and Levites into courses, follows an account of the militia of the nation, being divided also into monthly courses; which, though done in the beginning of David's reign, as Kimchi and Jarchi observe, yet is here related; and that it was so soon is clear from the instance of Asahel, who was killed while David was king in Hebron, (^{<1370>}1 Chronicles 27:7) to wit,

the chief fathers; the chief men in the tribes, the princes of them, not the natural fathers of the soldiers in each course, as a learned man suggests ^{f124}: since it can never be thought that such a number sprung from those as made a course of 24,000; for they are distinct from the captains and officers after mentioned, under which the soldiers were; besides, why should they be called "chief fathers?" these, no doubt, were the general officers or princes, under which the captains and inferior officers were:

and captains of thousands and hundreds; in the several tribes:

and their officers; that were under them:

that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month, throughout all the months of the year; by which it appears that the militia of the kingdom was divided into twelve courses, which served each month by turns; when one went out another came in; by which means the king was well supported and guarded, and had an army at once at command upon any insurrection or war that might arise; and each

course serving but one month in a year, it was no great burden upon them, even if they maintained themselves, since they were at leisure, the other eleven months, to attend to their business; and especially if it was, as Jarchi observes, that not the poor but the rich were selected for this service:

of every course were twenty and four thousand; so that the twelve courses amounted to 288,000 men.

Ver. 2-15. *Over the first course for the first month*, etc.] The month Nisan, sometimes called Abib, which was March:

was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel; the first and chief of David's worthies, (^{<3111>}1 Chronicles 11:11)

and in his course were twenty and four; and so in all the following ones; this man was of the posterity of Perez, or Pharez, a son of Judah, and so had the preference and command of all the captains of the army for that month:

Dodai an Ahohite; the same with Dodo, (^{<3112>}1 Chronicles 11:12) was over the course of the second month, the month Ziv, sometimes called Jiar, or April; and his lieutenant or successor was Mikloth:

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest; or rather a prince, a principal officer, was general of the army for the third month, Sivan, or May; the same was mighty among the thirty, and even above them, for he was among the three mighty, (^{<3122>}1 Chronicles 11:22,24) and Ammizabad his son succeeded him, or was his deputy, when other ways employed: though led by our version here, and following the Jewish writers, I have called Benaiah a priest, ((see Gill on "^{<1023>}1 Kings 2:31")), yet I am now rather of opinion that he was not one; for though priests might bear arms on some occasions, yet it is not likely that one should be in a constant military office, and especially general of an army; and besides, this man was of Kabzeel, a city in the tribe of Judah, which is not mentioned among the Levitical cities, (see ^{<1020>}2 Samuel 23:20 ^{<1021>}Joshua 15:21). Asahel the brother of Joab was over the course for the fourth month, Tammuz, or June, and who being slain by Abner, his son Zebadiah succeeded him: Shamhuth, the same with Shammah, (^{<3121>}2 Samuel 23:11) and Shammoth, (^{<3127>}1 Chronicles 11:27) was captain for the fifth month, Ab, or July: Ira the son of Ikkesh, the Tekoite, was over the course of the sixth month, Elul, or August, (see ^{<3128>}1 Chronicles 11:28). Helez the Pelonite was captain for the seventh month, Tisri, or September, (see ^{<3127>}1 Chronicles

11:27), the captain for the eighth month, Marchesvan, sometimes called Bul, or October, was Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zarbites, of the posterity of Zerah, a son of Judah in the line of Hushah, (^{<1304>}1 Chronicles 4:4 11:29), the captain of the course for the ninth month, Cisleu, or November was Abiezer, of Anethoth, in the tribe of Benjamin, (see ^{<1312>}1 Chronicles 11:28), Maharai, of Netophah, in the tribe of Judah, and of the posterity of Zerah, was over the course for the tenth month, Tebet, or December, (see ^{<1313>}1 Chronicles 11:30) and the captain for the eleventh month, Sheber, or January, was Benaiah, of Pirathon, in the tribe of Ephraim, see (^{<1313>}1 Chronicles 11:31) and over the course for the twelfth month, Adar, or February, was Heldai the Netophathite, the same with Heled, (^{<1313>}1 Chronicles 11:30) and who was of the posterity of Othniel, the first judge in Israel, (^{<0013>}Judges 1:13 3:9).

Ver. 16-22. *Furthermore, over the cities of Israel,* etc.] Were the following rulers or princes; the captains over the militia before named were of David's appointment; but these ruled over their respective tribes in their own right, or by the choice of their tribes: the ruler of the tribe of Reuben was Eliezer, the son of Zichri: of the tribe of Simeon, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; whether this was his father's or mother's name is not certain, it being the name both of a man and woman: of the tribe of Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: of the Aaronites, who were of the same tribe, but, being priests, are thus distinguished from the Levites, Zadok, who was made high priest in the times of Solomon: of the tribe of Judah, Elihu, a brother of David's, the same with Eliab, (^{<0966>}1 Samuel 16:6), of the tribe of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael: of the tribe of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of the tribe of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel: of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan westward, Joel the son of Pedaiah: of the half tribe of Manasseh, in Gilead, on the other side Jordan eastward, Iddo the son of Zechariah: of the tribe of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner, the famous general on the side of Ishbosheth; of the tribe of Dan, Azareel the son of Jeroham:

these were the princes of the tribes of Israel; of all excepting Gad and Asher, who are omitted; perhaps he that was prince of the tribe of Reuben, or else of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, was ruler of Gad and Asher; these lying between Zebulun and Naphtali, might be under the prince of one of them.

Ver. 23. *But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under*, etc.] Only those that were twenty years and upwards; but, according to Cornelius Bertram ^{f125}, he numbered them that were under twenty, though but sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen years of age, provided they were of robust bodies, and of a tall stature, and able to bear arms; which he takes to be the sin of David, in numbering the people, being contrary to the law of God; yet though he had ordered them to be numbered, and they were, yet he would not take them and put them into the account of his chronicles, as in the next verse, that his sin might not be known, (see ^{<1019>}2 Samuel 24:9)

because the Lord had said, he would increase Israel like to the stars in the heavens; which are not to be numbered, and therefore David sinned in attempting to number the people.

Ver. 24. *Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number*, etc.] By the order of David, but entirely against his own will, (see ^{<1310>}1 Chronicles 21:2-4,6),

but he finished not; the two tribes of Benjamin and Levi not being counted by him, (^{<1316>}1 Chronicles 21:6)

because there fell wrath for it against Israel; the plague being broke forth before he had done numbering, which put a stop to it, (^{<1314>}1 Chronicles 21:14)

neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of David; that which was brought in by Joab, though imperfect, was not entered into the diary, journal, or annals which David ordered to be written of all memorable events and transactions in his reign; and which were afterwards carried on by the kings of Judah, often referred to in the preceding books; and this was done, not because of the imperfection of the account, but because David did not choose this sin of his should be transmitted to posterity, though it has been, notwithstanding this precaution of his.

Ver. 25-32. *And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel*, etc.] The historian here proceeds to relate who were employed in the economical and civil affairs of David; and the first mentioned is the lord of his treasury, who had the care of his gold and silver brought into his exchequer, either by a levy on his own people, or by the tribute of others: Jehonathan the son of Uziah had the care of the storehouses, in which were laid up what the fields, cities, villages, and castles that belonged to the king produced, whether by fruits gathered in, or by rents collected: Ezri

the son of Chelub looked after his workmen in the fields, employed in the tillage of the ground: Shimei of Ramath, in the tribe of Benjamin, had the care of the vineyards, to see that they were dressed and pruned, and kept in good order: Zabdi of Shepham, (~~0610~~ Numbers 34:10,11) had the charge of the wine squeezed out of the grapes, both in the presses and in the cellars: Baalhanan of Gedor, in the tribe of Judah, (~~0656~~ Joshua 15:36,58) was over the olive and sycamore trees, to see that they were well taken care of: and Joash was entrusted with the cellars where the oil was deposited: Shitrai the Sharonite had the herds of cattle fed in Sharon committed to his trust; whether in Sharon beyond Jordan, or that about Lydda and Joppa, near the Mediterranean sea, both affording fruitful pastures for herds; and this man, being of Sharon, was a fit man to be employed in such service: and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over those herds that were in the valleys, where were good pastures for them; such officers Pharaoh king of Egypt had, (~~0476~~ Genesis 47:6) and as early as the times of Ninus king of Assyria, one named Simma was master of the king's cattle ^{f126}, as Faustulus was to Amulius king of the Latines ^{f127}; and so Tyrrhus in Virgil ^{f128} had the command of all the king's cattle; and Cicero mentions another in the same office ^{f129}: Obil the Ishmaelite (an Arab, as the Targum) had the care of the camels; and a very proper person he was, who must know the nature of them, and how to manage them, Arabia, or the land of the Ishmaelites, abounding with them. This man was so called, either because he was an Ishmaelite by birth, and was proselyted to the Jewish religion; or he was an Israelite that had dwelt some time in the land of Ishmael, and therefore so called. Bochart ^{f130} thinks he had his name of Obil from his office, the word in the Arabic language signifying a keeper of camels. Jehdeiah the Meronothite was over the asses, which were employed in ploughing and carrying burdens; and Jaziz the Hagarite was over the flocks of sheep, the chief shepherd, who had the command of all the under shepherds, and a very proper person, being an Hagarite, or Arab; for such dwelt in tents for the sake of pasturage for their flocks, as Jarchi notes: these were the principal men that had the care of David's personal substance; so, in later times, the Roman Caesars ^{f131} had such sort of servants to take care of their farms, fields, fruit, cattle, etc. the rest that follow were David's courtiers. Jonathan, or to whom David was uncle, the son of Shimea, his brother being a wise and learned man, was his counsellor, (see ~~1021~~ 2 Samuel 21:21) and Jehiel the Hachmonite was preceptor, or tutor to the king's sons, that brought them up, and took care of their education; Ahithophel was his counsellor until the conspiracy and rebellion of Absalom; and Hushai the

Archite was his companion, friend, and favourite, with whom he conversed at leisure hours. After the death of Ahithophel, Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar, were his counsellors, and Joab the general of his army.