

"The King's Army" 1 Chronicles 12:22-38
Sunday 9AM & 11:15 5/19/19

“When shifts are being initiated by God in the midst of His Kingdom, those who belong to Him are entrusted with properly stewarding what it is that He is facilitating. The Kingdom of God is not static - it is dynamic. The Kingdom advances via the cooperation of the children of God with whatever God desires to accomplish. Each of us has an important role to play. We are uniquely equipped by God to do our part. When God initiates a shift, He often arrays His children as soldiers in Heaven’s army. This message reveals an Old Testament parallel to this New Testament reality. We learn from the army of David what it looks like to become committed as soldiers in the army of Jesus. You have an assigned place in the battle array alongside all other believers.”

***Biblical/Historical context (22-23)**

"For from day to day men came to David to help him, until there was a great army, like an army of God. 23 These are the numbers of the divisions of the armed troops who came to David in Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the LORD." - 1 Chronicles 12:22-23

The reign of Saul began with the fleshly demand of Israel for a king to rule over them. They then chose a king, Saul, who was outwardly impressive in the flesh. Nearly all of Saul's reign was characterized by his fleshly impulses. David had been anointed earlier by Samuel and, after Saul's death, the tribes had to decide whether to remain loyal to the house of Saul by crowning Ishbosheth, or to come and pledge allegiance to God's chosen, David. This passage is the account of the tribes choosing to pledge loyalty to David and coming to submit themselves as his soldiers. Among these 330,000+ Israelites, there was different tribal heritage, different generations, different levels of equipping, different degrees of courage in the heart and different skillsets for battle. All of them presented themselves before their king as loyal subjects, committing to secure and defend his reign.

I. Judah - Those equipped for warfare (24)

"The men of Judah bearing shield and spear were 6,800 armed troops."

- A. Their weaponry - **shields** to defend what is right, **spears** to destroy what is wrong
- B. Their willingness - "...armed troops..." *They understood that their weapons were to be used in battle*

II. Simeon - Those with heightened courage (25)

"Of the Simeonites, mighty men of valor for war, 7,100."

Nothing is said of their training or weaponry, simply that they had potential connected to courage.

- A. The ability of their hands - "...mighty men..."
- B. The nobility of their hearts - "...men of valor for war..."

III. Levi - Those of consecration and convictions (26-28)

"Of the Levites 4,600. 27 The prince Jehoiada, of the house of Aaron, and with him 3,700. 28 Zadok, a young man mighty in valor, and twenty-two commanders from his own fathers' house."

- A. The name Zadok means 'just'
- B. He was unimpressive - young, only had a small group of 22 men
- C. He was unafraid - he didn't let his lack of prominence keep him from joining the fight! His convictions shaped his actions.
- D. He is unforgotten - this young man is recorded in Scripture because of his devotion to the king

IV. Benjamin - Those who were reluctant (29)

"Of the Benjaminites, the kinsmen of Saul, 3,000, of whom the majority had to that point kept their allegiance to the house of Saul."

These relatives of the former King Saul had been very reluctant to acknowledge David as King over Israel. Saul's son Ishbosheth had assumed the throne after his father's death. He reigned in a different place for two years while David reigned in Hebron immediately after the death of Saul. Only after Ishbosheth was murdered did the Benjamites fully align with David's throne. How gracious of David to receive them, even though they came reluctantly. David might have rejected or even killed them. Instead, he welcomed them into his army like he did all those from the other tribes.

V. Ephraim - Those with proven testimonies (30)

"Of the Ephraimites 20,800, mighty men of valor, famous men in their fathers' houses."

- A. Their courage - "...mighty men of valor..."
- B. Their character - "...famous in their fathers' houses..."

“famous” (Hebrew) - having a conspicuous position, marked with honorable character.

Ephraim was blessed by Jacob over his older brother Manasseh. The tribe of Ephraim was a privileged tribe, and the men who were selected did not take their privilege lightly. They Lived Honorably!

VI. Manasseh - Those precisely chosen and called (31)

"Of the half-tribe of Manasseh 18,000, who were expressly named to come and make David king."

- A. They were chosen - Have you personally heard God call your name to the battle? He calls us all on some level.
- B. They were committed - they simply came to secure the reign and dominion of David as the king.

VII. Issachar - Those discerning ones who knew how to do what was needed (32)

"Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command."

- A. They were established leaders - "...200 chiefs..."
- B. They were few in number - **only 200 (not everyone is called to lead)**
- C. They had wise insight - "...men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."
- D. They were trusted by their followers - "...all their kinsmen under command."

VIII. Zebulun - Those with experience, equipping and enthusiasm (33)

"Of Zebulun 50,000 seasoned troops, equipped for battle with all the weapons of war, to help David with singleness of purpose."

These seem to be the ideal soldiers - well balanced and fully committed. These were seasoned - proven by time and testing, operating with the wisdom that can only come from experience. They knew what it meant to fight and had come equipped for various types of military engagement. There was no division between them within their tribe, nor was there any separation from the purposes of David as the king.

IX. Naphtali, Dan & Asher - Those equipped & willing to be sent at any time (34-36)

"Of Naphtali 1,000 commanders with whom were 37,000 men armed with shield and spear. 35 Of the Danites 28,600 men equipped for battle. 36 Of Asher 40,000 seasoned troops ready for battle."

While there is nothing mentioned that seems to mark these three tribes as bearing any unique value, we are told that they came in great numbers. Also mentioned is the fact that they came prepared with shield, spears and a willingness to step into action at the first call. The Apostle Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 4:2**, "Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." **Proverbs 20:6** says, "Most every man will proclaim his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" May we be encouraged that there is a willingness from the Lord to validate those who may not be flashy, impressive or have any one particular thing about them that stands out. These three tribes remind us of the value of being faithful and available.

X. Reuben, Gad & Manasseh - Those who commit whatever is required (37)

"Of the Reubenites and Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh from beyond the Jordan, 120,000 men armed with all the weapons of war."

These tribes are called the Transjordan tribes because they settled on the other side of the Jordan River, therefore they had a more challenging trek to come and join the other tribes in pledging allegiance to David. They did not allow inconvenience to inhibit them from what their new king required of them. In fact, no other group of soldiers outnumbered these who came from the other side of the Jordan. Their journey was demanding, but they arrived in a great display of commitment, bringing their weapons with them.

The summary statement of all of the various tribes pledging their commitment to King David is found in

1 Chronicles 12:38 - "All these, men of war, arrayed in battle order, came to Hebron with a whole heart to make David king over all Israel. Likewise, all the rest of Israel were of a single mind to make David king."

XI. Precious celebrants - Those who refused to forget to celebrate the works of God (39-40)

"And they were there with David for three days, eating and drinking, for their brothers had made preparation for them. 40 And also their relatives, from as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, came bringing food on donkeys and on camels and on mules and on oxen, abundant provisions of flour, cakes of figs, clusters of raisins, and wine and oil, oxen and sheep, for there was joy in Israel."

It is glorious to read that, in the context of soldiers, weaponry and preparation for future battles, there were those who refused to miss the opportunity to celebrate what the Lord had done in unifying Israel under King David. From various tribes there arose people who sacrificed money, time and effort in order to ensure that the victory was not merely recorded in a chronicler's book, but actually publicly celebrated. Three days were consecrated with a sumptuous feast with plenty of wine. God had unified His people under His chosen servant, David. That was worthy of throwing a party.

What can the Church learn from this historical account?

None of the tribes came to King David in a commitment to fight for themselves. They came to pledge allegiance to fight for David and his dominion. They did not lose their individual tribal connections, they just submitted those things to the glory of David's reign and kingdom. **In the Church, we do not lose our God-given distinctions when we come in submission to King Jesus.** We are different ages, different races, speak different languages, are birthed into different cultures, possess different spiritual gifting, minister in different arenas of service, are granted different abilities, and are sent unto different assignments. We bring all of those variations with us in a unified submission and loyalty to the glory of Jesus. We fight the battles He assigns to us. We also assist others in the battles He has assigned to them. **Within the Church, our tribe does not fight another tribe.** We fight together against the enemy. Some of us are designed as our primary assignment to function in:

- **Intercessory prayer**
- **International missions**
- **Local evangelism**
- **Worship as musicians**
- **Worship as vocalists**
- **Evangelists**
- **Teachers of the words**
- **Prophetic ministry**
- **Healing ministry**
- **Apostolic vision**
- **Shepherds**
- **Funding kingdom endeavors**
- **Moving the entire flock**
- **Ministering to individual sheep**
- **Participating in mercy and care ministry**

- Taking care of the physical houses of prayer and worship

Romans 12:4-6 - "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..."

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 - "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...For the body does not consist of one member but of many...But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body...Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

Ephesians 4:15-16 - "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

1 Peter 4:10-11 - "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies - in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."