

1 Chronicles 18 - The Wars of David; Numbers in Chronicles that Disagree with Other OT Passages

II. David prepares to build the temple (1 Chr 10:1—29:30)

(5) David's military victories (1 Chr 18:1—20:8)

(A) David defeats Philistines, Moabites, and Arameans (18:1-8)

(B) Hamath (18:9-11)

(C) Edom (18:12-13)

(D) David reigned over all of Israel (18:14-17)

1 Chronicles 18

(5) David's military victories (1 Chr 18:1—20:8)

(A) David defeats Philistines, Moabites, and Arameans (18:1-8) (Cf. 2 Sam 8:1-14)

1 Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines.

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1 After this, David defeated and subdued the Philistines, and then took possession of Gath and its towns from Philistine control.

1 Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines.

- God gave David victories over the Philistines (v1; Cf. 2 Sam 8:1), the Moabites (v2; Cf. 2 Sam 8:2), the Arameans (v3-11; Cf. 2 Sam 8:3-12), the Edomites (v12-13; Cf. 2 Sam 8:13-14), and the Ammonites (19:1—20:3; Cf. 2 Sam 10:1-19)

— The Chronicler also noted David's defeat of the giants who came from the home of David's first great adversary, Goliath (20:4-8)

1 Chr 18:1—21:30 selectively recounts David's military exploits. They record the fulfillment of God's promised victory over David's enemies as part of the Davidic Covenant (17:8). 1 Chr 18 compares with 2 Sam 8; 1 Chr 19 compares with 2 Sam 10.

2 And he defeated Moab, and the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.

2 He defeated Moab, and the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.

2 He also conquered Moab, placing them in servitude and making them pay tribute.

2 And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

3 David also defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah *as far as* Hamath, as he went to establish his rule to the river Euphrates.

3 David also defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah *as far as* Hamath, as he went to establish his rule to the Euphrates River.

3 David also defeated King Hadadezer of Zobah, which is near Hamath, while he was going about establishing his hegemony as far as the Euphrates River.

3 And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates.

- The description of Moab's defeat is much milder in tone than the description given in 2 Sam 8:2

— The Chronicler merely mentioned that Moab became a vassal state, whereas Samuel spoke of David's systematic slaughter of two-thirds of the population

— The reason may be the Chronicler's overall purpose to extol the Davidic dynasty, the roots of which are at least partially found in Moab with his great-grandmother Ruth (Ruth 4:13,21)

4 David took from him a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand foot soldiers, and David hamstrung *almost* all the chariot horses, but left *enough* of them for a hundred chariots.

4 David took from him 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers, and David hamstrung all the chariot horses, but reserved *enough* of them for 100 chariots.

4 David confiscated 1,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers from him, and hamstrung all of the chariot horses except for a reserve force of 100 chariots.

4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them an hundred chariots.

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand men of the Arameans.

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 men of the Arameans.

5 When Arameans came from Damascus to help King Hadadezer of Zobah, David killed 22,000 of them.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadarezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put *garrisons* among the Arameans of Damascus; and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing tribute. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

6 Then David put *garrisons* among the Arameans of Damascus; and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing tribute. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

6 David later erected garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans were placed under servitude to David, to whom they paid tribute.

6 Then David put garrisons in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought gifts. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

- The garrisons in Israel's neighbor states extended his influence beyond his own borders

7 And David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

7 David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem.

7 David also confiscated the gold shields that belonged to Hadadezer's officials and took them to Jerusalem.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 Also from Tibhath and Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took a very large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze Sea and the pillars and the bronze utensils.

8 Also from Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took a very large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the bronze utensils.

8 David also confiscated a vast quantity of bronze from Tibhath and Cun, cities under Hadadezer's control. Later on, Solomon crafted the bronze sea, the pillars, and the bronze vessels for the Temple.

8 Likewise from Tibhath, and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, brought David very much brass, wherewith Solomon made the brasen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass.

- David dedicated to the Lord (for the temple construction) the wealth acquired from the nations he conquered (Cf. 2 Sam 8:7-13; 1 Chr 22:14; 26:26; 29:2-5)

(B) Hamath (18:9-11)

9 Now when Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah,

9 Now when Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah,

9 When King Tou of Hamath learned that David had conquered King Hadadezer of Zobah's entire army,

9 Now when Tou king of Hamath heard how David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer king of Zobah;

10 he sent Hadoram his son to King David to greet him and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and had defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou. And *Hadoram brought* all kinds of articles of gold and silver and bronze.

10 he sent Hadoram his son to King David to greet him and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and had defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou. And *Hadoram brought* all kinds of articles of gold and silver and bronze.

10 he sent his son Hadoram to King David to meet and congratulate him, because he had fought against and defeated Hadadezer. Since Hadadezer had often been to war against Tou, he sent all sorts of gold, silver, and bronze goods

10 He sent Hadoram his son to king David, to enquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; (for Hadarezer had war with Tou;) and with him all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass.

11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD, with the silver and the gold which he had carried away from all the nations: from Edom, Moab, the sons of Ammon, the Philistines, and from Amalek.

11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD with the silver and the gold which he had carried away from all the nations: from Edom, Moab, the sons of Ammon, the Philistines, and from Amalek.

11 to King David, which David also dedicated to the LORD, along with silver and gold that he confiscated from all the surrounding nations, including Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and Amalek.

11 Them also king David dedicated unto the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all these nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

(C) Edom (18:12-13)

12 Moreover, Abishai the son of Zeruiah defeated eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

12 Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah defeated 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

12 Zeruiah's son Abishai killed 18,000 Edomites in the Salt Valley.

12 Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand.

- In his recounting of the Edomite conquest, the Chronicler gave credit for its success to David's nephew Abishai (Zeruiah was a half-sister of David), who killed 18,000 Edomites, rather than to David himself (Cf. 2 Sam 8:13)

— This is unusual in that the chronicler generally promoted David rather than his underlings

- The superscription to Psalm 60 states, on the other hand, that Joab, Abishai's brother, killed 12,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt

— Perhaps this difference is explainable by noting that the entire campaign was under Abishai's direct command, and that Joab was responsible (with the soldiers in his contingency) for killing two-thirds of the Edomites

13 Then he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

13 Then he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

13 He erected garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became subservient to David, while the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.

13 And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

(D) David reigned over all of Israel (18:14-17) (Cf. 2 Sam 8:15-18)

14 So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people.

14 So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people.

14 So David reigned over all of Israel, administering justice and equity to all of his people.

14 So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.

15 Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was **secretary**;

15 Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;

15 Zeruiah's son Joab served in charge of the army, Ahilud's son Jehoshaphat was his personal archivist,

15 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, recorder.

- "...secretary" - *mazkir*, "to remember" or "writer of chronicles"

— This was an important role in the courts, where he would keep the king informed, advise him, and communicate the king's commands

Interestingly, the Lord is also depicted, like the human king, as having "recorders" though the word is translated "remembrancers"; their responsibility was to keep reminding Him of His stated intentions until they were completed (Is 62:6). This is an aspect of prayer which is easily overlooked, though it is implicit in the Lord's prayer: "thy kingdom come, thy will be done."

16 and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar *were* priests, and **Shavsha** *was* secretary;

16 and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar *were* priests, and Shavsha *was* secretary;

16 Ahitub's son Zadok and Abiathar's son Ahimelech were priests, Shavsha was his personal secretary,

16 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Shavsha was scribe;

- "...Shavsha" - called "Sheva" (20:25), "Shisha" (1 Kings 4:3), and "Seraiah" (2 Sam 8:17)

- "...secretary" - a job similar to Secretary of State

- The mention of Zadok and Ahimelech together indicates the transition that was occurring in the office of priest

— Ahimelech, son of Abiathar, was a descendant of Eli, whose priestly line Samuel had said would come to an end (1 Sam 3:10-14)

— Zadok was a descendant of Aaron through Eleazar (1 Chr 6:4-8). Through Zadok the line of priests eventually continued through the remainder of OT times.

17 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and the sons of David *were* **chiefs** at the king's side.

17 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and the sons of David *were* chiefs at the king's side.

17 Jehoiada's son Benaiah supervised the special forces and mercenaries, while David's sons worked as chief officials in service to the king.

17 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David were chief about the king.

- David's "cabinet" included:

- Joab as military commander
- Jehoshaphat, record keeper

- Zadok and Ahimelech, chief priests
 - Seraiah, secretary
 - Benaiah (Cf. 23:2-23), leader of the elite Kerethite and Pelethite troops (also mentioned in 1 Sam 30:14; 2 Sam 15:18; 20:7,23; 1 Kings 1:38,44; 1 Chr 18:17; Ezek 25:16; Zeph 2:5); he was possibly related to the Philistines in some way.
- "...chiefs" - this Hebrew word, usually rendered "priests," is translated here properly as "chief officials" [ISV] (Cf. 2 Sam 20:26)
- This no doubt is the better meaning since David's sons, as Judeans, were ineligible to serve as priests

Numbers in Chronicles that Disagree with Other OT Passages

The OT text is, on the whole, marvelously well preserved. There is also evidence from the parallel passages in Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles and (especially) in Ezra 2 and Neh 7, that numbers were peculiarly difficult to transmit accurately. We have instances of extra noughts being added to a number: 2 Sam 10:18 reads "700 chariots," 1 Chr 19:18 reads "7,000." A digit can drop out: 2 Kings 24:8 gives the age of Jehoiachin on accession as 18, whereas 2 Chr 39:9 gives it as 8. In Ezra 2 and Neh 7 the digits often vary by one unit. And there are other errors of copying, many of which are easily explained.

In the modern Hebrew Bible, all numbers are written out in full, but for a long time the text was written without vowels. The absence of vowels made it possible to confuse two words which are crucial to this problem: *'eleph* and *'alluph*. Without vowel points these words look identical: *'Eleph* is the ordinary word for "thousand," but it can also be used in a variety of other senses: e.g., "family" (Judges 6:15, RV) or "clan" (Zech 9:7; 12:5-6, RSV) or perhaps a military unit. *'Alluph* is used for the "chieftains" of Edom (Gen 36:15-43); probably for a commander of a military "thousand"; and almost certainly for the professional, fully-armed soldier.

At certain periods, warfare was conducted by two sharply distinguished types of fighting men—the professional soldiers who were fully armed, and the folk army, whose only weapons were those of the peasant shepherd. It seems clear that in a number of places the word for professional soldier has been misunderstood as meaning "thousand." Take, for example, the attack on the little town of Gibeah in Judges 20. Verse 2 says that 400,000 footmen "that drew the sword" assembled. If these were in fact 400 fully armed foot-soldiers, the subsequent narrative makes excellent sense.

David's feast in Hebron in 1 Chr 12 appears to be attended by enormous numbers, not of ordinary men, but of distinguished leaders—some 340,800 of them. In this case it looks as though in fact there were "captains of thousands" and "captains of hundreds," and that by metonymy or by abbreviation "thousand" has been used for "captains of thousands" and "hundreds" for "captains of hundreds." "Thousand" and "hundred" have been treated as

numerals and added together. When these figures are unscrambled, we get a total of roughly 2,000 "famous men," which seems eminently reasonable.

Along these lines most of the numerical problems of the later history fall into place. In 1 Kings 20:27-30, the little Israelite army killed 100 (not 100,000) foot soldiers, and the wall of Aphek killed 27 (not 27,000) more. The Ethiopian invasion had a thousand, not a million, warriors (2 Chr 14:9). Ten (not 10,000) were cast down from the top of the rock 2 Chr 25:12).

**NUMBERS IN CHRONICLES THAT DISAGREE
WITH THEIR OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS¹¹⁵**

	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>Lower</i>		<i>Parallel Passage</i>	<i>Evaluation of Chronicles</i>
A			1 Chron. 11:11	300 slain by Jashobeam, not 800	2 Sam. 23:8	Scribal error
B	1 Chron. 18:4			Hadadezer's 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen, not 1,000 [chariots] and 700 horsemen	2 Sam. 8:4	Correct
C	1 Chron. 19:18a			7,000 Syrian charioteers slain, not 700	2 Sam. 10:18a	Correct
D			1 Chron. 19:18b ¹¹⁶	and 40,000 foot soldiers, not horsemen	2 Sam. 10:18b	Correct
E	1 Chron. 21:5a			Israel's 1,100,000 troops, not 800,000	2 Sam. 24:9a	Different objects
F			1 Chron. 21:5b	Judah's 470,000 troops, not 500,000	2 Sam. 24:9b	More precise
G			1 Chron. 21:12	Three years of famine, not seven	2 Sam. 24:13	Correct
H	1 Chron. 21:25			Ornan paid 600 gold shekels, not 50 silver	2 Sam. 24:24	Different objects of purchase
I	2 Chron. 2:2			3,600 to supervise the temple construction, not 3,300	1 Kings 5:16	Different method of reckoning
J	2 Chron. 2:10			22,000 baths of oil to Hiram's woodmen, not 20 kors (=200 baths)	1 Kings 5:11	Different objects
K	2 Chron. 2:18			3,600 to supervise the temple construction, not 3,300	1 Kings 5:16	Different method of reckoning
L	2 Chron. 3:15			Temple pillars 35 cubits, not 18	1 Kings 7:15	Scribal error
M	2 Chron. 4:5			Sea holding 3,000 baths, not 2,000	1 Kings 7:26	Scribal error

N			2 Chron. 8:10	250 chief officers for building the temple, not 550	1 Kings 9:23	Different method of reckoning
O	2 Chron. 8:18			450 gold talents from Ophir, not 420	1 Kings 9:28	Correct or scribal error
P		2 Chron. 9:16		300 gold bekas per shield, not 3 minas	1 Kings 10:17	Different method of reckoning
Q			2 Chron. 9:25	4,000 stalls for horses, not 40,000	1 Kings 4:26	Correct
R	2 Chron. 22:2			Ahaziah king at 42 years, not 22	2 Kings 8:26	Scribal error
S			2 Chron. 36:9	Jehoiachin king at 8, not 18	2 Kings 24:8	Scribal error