

The Ideal United Kingdom (1 Chronicles 9:35 – 2 Chronicles 9:31)

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David's Widespread Support from Israel (1 Chronicles 11:1–12:40)

With God's support for David established through Saul's tragic death, the Chronicler continued to demonstrate the wonder of David's rise to power by turning to his widespread support in Israel. He drew from different periods of the king's life to demonstrate that virtually no opposition arose against David.

Comparison of 11:1-12:40 with 2 Samuel

The following comparison of Samuel and Chronicles reveals several important features of the Chronicler's outlook on David's widespread support in Israel (see figure 12).

1 Chr		2 Sam
-----	David and Saul (omitted)	1:1-4:12
11:1-3	Anointing at Hebron (parallel)	5:1-3
-----	David Reigns in Hebron (omitted)	5:4-5
11:4-9	Conquering of Jerusalem (parallel)	5:6-10
11:10-47	Support at Hebron (expanded/displaced)	23:8-39
12:1-40	Further Support for David (added)	-----

Comparison of 1 Chr 11:1-12:40 with 2 Sam (figure 12)

A number of small differences between these sections of Samuel and Chronicles will be noted in the comments below. At least three variations are significant on a larger scale.

First, the most obvious difference is the omission of 2 Sam 1-4. These chapters relate several important interactions between the houses of Saul and David after Saul's death. David heard of Saul's death and lamented (2 Sam 1); he received a public anointing and struggled with Saul's kinsmen (2 Sam 2-4). By omitting these chapters, the Chronicler presented the transition from Saul to David as virtually unchallenged.

Second, the Chronicler drew from two different places in Samuel for his record of David's national support. He derived the final anointing of David at Hebron (11:1-3) and David's victory over the Jebusites (11:4-9) from 2 Sam 5:1-10. Then he drew from a distant passage (11:10-47 // 2 Sam 23:8-39). As we will see, the Chronicler arranged this material topically rather than in chronological order.

Structure of 11:1-12:40

These two chapters form an extensive symmetrical geographical pattern (see figure 11). With the exception of Jerusalem (11:4-9), each location appears twice. This repetitive geographical structure has the effect of echoing the theme of widespread support for David's kingship time and again.

Beyond this, comparisons with Samuel demonstrate that the Chronicler's outline also follows a twofold chronological pattern. According to Samuel, David's time at the strongholds (see 1 Sam 22:1-5; 23:14,29) preceded his stay at Ziklag (see 1 Sam 27:6). His time at Ziklag preceded the anointing at Hebron (see 2 Sam 5:1-4). In this light we can see that the Chronicler presented a temporal regression followed by temporal progression. He began with the anointing and support at Hebron and then turned to the background of this event at Ziklag and the stronghold. Following these temporal regressions (Hebron → Ziklag → Stronghold), the Chronicler moved forward in time from the stronghold through Ziklag and reached Hebron again (Stronghold → Ziklag → Hebron).

This chronological arrangement makes it appropriate to translate several opening sentences in the pluperfect: "... they ... had given his kingship ..." (11:10), "... men who had come to David ..." (12:1), "... some ... had defected ..." (12:19), "... who had come ..." (12:39).

Anointing at Hebron (and Establishment in Jerusalem) (11:1-9)

The Chronicler moved directly from the collapse of Saul's kingdom to the anointing of David. The book of Samuel reveals that this event was actually David's third anointing. The first occurred privately (see 1 Sam 16:1-13); the second was more public at Hebron (see 2 Sam 2:1-7). This third anointing was unique in that a solemn covenant between Israel and David preceded it (11:3).

Comparison of 11:1-9 with 2 Sam 5:1-3

The Chronicler varied from Samuel in two important ways in this passage. First, he shifted from "all the tribes of Israel" (2 Sam 5:1) to his standard expression **all Israel** (11:1). This change is not substantial in itself, but he also changed "the king and his men" (2 Sam 5:6) to **all the Israelites** (11:4). By shifting to this similar terminology twice the Chronicler emphasized that David received support from the entire nation.

Second, the anointing of David closes with the additional phrase **as the Lord had promised through Samuel** (11:3). This line amplifies the fact that David's anointing was ordained by God.

Third, Chronicles omits 2 Sam 5:4-5, David's seven and a half year reign in Hebron. This omission draws together David's anointing and the establishment of Jerusalem as two closely related episodes. In the Chronicler's viewpoint the years in Hebron were immaterial.

Structure of 11:1-9

This passage consists of two closely related episodes (see figure 11). The first episode divides into three parts. The nation invited David to be king (11:1-2); this invitation balances with the actual anointing of David (11:3b). David's covenant agreement with the nation forms the turning point in the story (11:3a).

The second episode takes the form of five symmetrical steps. David and Israel marched against Jerusalem (11:4a); this attack balances with David's reconstruction of the city (11:8-9). The Jebusites challenged whether David could enter the city (11:4b-5a); this mockery was answered by David taking up residence there (11:7). The story turns decisively toward its end when David captured Jerusalem (11:5b-6).

All Israel Anoints David as King (11:1-3)

The story of David's anointing begins with **all Israel** gathering at Hebron and inviting David to be their king (11:1). The people supported their request with two reasons. First, David had been their military leader even during the reign of Saul (see 1 Sam 18:5-8; 27-30; 21:11; 23:1-5; 29:5; 30:1-20). Second, David had received the prophecy that he would **shepherd** Israel and become their **ruler** (11:2). We have no record of this particular word from the Lord, but see 11:3.

David responded to Israel's invitation by making a **compact** ("covenant" see NAS, NRS, NKJ) with the people (11:3). It is likely that this covenant was similar to that of Saul in 1 Samuel 10:25. There Samuel wrote on a scroll "the regulations of the kingship" (1 Sam 10:25). This written constitutional document defined the role of the king and probably set limits on his privileges along the lines of Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The Law of Moses strictly limited Israelite kingship. David's willingness to enter this covenant exalted him as a model king for the Chronicler's post-exilic readers. Any person ruling on the throne of David must be fully aware of the covenantal restrictions on his leadership (see 2 Chr 23:1,3,11; see also, *Introduction: 13) Covenant*).

The closing scene of this episode balances with the opening scene. The people invited David to be king (11:1-2); in the end they anointed him as king (11:3b). By adding **as the Lord had promised through Samuel** (11:3b), the Chronicler balanced the earlier reference to prophecy given to David (11:2). Both the beginning and ending of this section emphasize the divine authorization of David's anointing (see 10:13-14; 11:9-10,11b; 12:18,23; 14:2; see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*).

All Israel and David Make Jerusalem the Royal Capital (11:4-9)

This episode begins with David moving against Jerusalem (11:4a) and ends with him rebuilding the city and becoming **more and more powerful** (11:9). As noted above, the Chronicler drew these events close to David's anointing (see 11:1-3) by omitting his reign in Hebron (see 2 Sam 5:4-5). This omission demonstrated that David's anointing directly led to his possession and rebuilding of Israel's chief city.

David's possession of Jerusalem was particularly important for the Chronicler and his readers. During the exile, the city had been in ruins, but the returnees were to rebuild Jerusalem as the royal capital of the post-exilic community. David's construction efforts in this episode established the city as the historical seat of royal power. His efforts also explain why the re-establishment of the kingdom after exile must begin in the city of Jerusalem.

A touch of irony appears in the middle portion of the narrative. The Jebusites mocked David saying, "**you will not get in here**" (11:5a). After a parenthetical aside concerning Joab

(11:6), the Chronicler boldly ridiculed the Jebusite defiance. He indicated that David not only entered Jerusalem, but **took up residence in the fortress** (11:7). Jerusalem even became known as **the city of David** (11:7).

The final words of the story explain how David won the city. He was victorious **because the Lord Almighty was with him** (11:9). The Hebrew expression translated **Lord Almighty** in NIV may be translated "Lord of Hosts" (see NRS, NAS, NKJ). This divine appellation portrayed God as the leader of the armies of heaven. The Chronicler used this terminology only two other times in his history (see 17:7,24). Even so, these references resonated with frequent uses of the same terminology by post-exilic prophets Haggai (14 times) and Zechariah (51 times). The image of God as the divine warrior was central to the concerns of Israel after the exile. The nation's only hope for security and blessing was that God would fight for them as he had for David.

David's victory occurred because the Lord of heaven's army was **with him** (11:9). As Asa's words explained in 2 Chr 13:12, for God to be "with" someone in the context of warfare meant that God led into battle and fought on his behalf (see *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). David won his battle against the Jebusites because God fought for him.

From the outset of David's reign, the Chronicler drew a sharp contrast between Saul and David. Saul's defeat at the hands of the Philistines was divine judgment against him. In effect, God fought *against* Saul (see 10:14). David, however, was blessed with victory over his enemies because God fought *with* him. This contrast demonstrated divine favor toward David and his dynasty that extended even to the post-exilic period (see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*).

Military Support at Hebron (11:10-47)

The Chronicler turned next to David's military supporters at Hebron. This passage does not actually mention Hebron. Yet, the similarity in terminology between 11:10 and 12:23 (where Hebron is mentioned) suggests strongly that the Chronicler presented this list of **the chiefs of David's mighty men** (11:10) as those who joined him at Hebron in balance with 12:23-38a (see figure 11). The latter passage completes the description of supporters by focusing on the rank and file. The Chronicler continued his positive portrait of David by drawing attention to the great warriors who supported David at Hebron.

Comparison of 11:10-47 with 2 Sam 23:8-39

The middle portion of this passage (11:11-41a) closely parallels 2 Sam 23:8-39. Some minor differences appear, but they are of little significance. Even so, two noteworthy

variations occur at the beginning and end of this material where the Chronicler added the opening verse (11:10) and the final six and a half verses (11:41b-47).

First, 11:10 introduces the significance of the lists that follow. The Chronicler made it clear that these were people who supported David as king over all Israel.

Second, 11:41b-47 expands the parallel list in Samuel to include some geographical areas omitted there. 11:11-41a focuses primarily on locations west of the Jordan. 11:41b-47, however, deals primarily with areas east of the Jordan (although some are unknown). These lists demonstrate the breadth of David's support.

Structure of 11:10-47

This passage combines a number of lists and short narratives (see figure 11). Lists of individual warriors appear at the beginning and end of this material (11:11b,20-47). Near the center, two brief narratives describe scenarios which illustrate the great feats these supporters of David accomplished (11:12-19).

Introduction to Chiefs of Mighty Men (11:10-11a)

In 11:10-11a the Chronicler expanded 2 Sam 23:8 to provide a more substantial introduction to the **chiefs of David's mighty men** (11:10). Three elements emerge from his expansion. 1) These men **gave his kingship strong support** (11:10). The Chronicler presented these names because they were leading supporters of David. 2) Their support for David was **together with all Israel** (11:10). These men were not alone; they joined and led the entire nation (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). 3) The activities of these men were **as the Lord had promised** (11:10). David's rise to kingship was according to divine, not human design (see 10:13-14; 11:3,14; 12:18,23;14:2; see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*).

The NIV obscures an important portion of 11:10. The Hebrew of this verse reads "as the Lord had promised *concerning Israel*" (see NAS, NRS, NKJ). This expression reveals an aspect of the Chronicler's outlook that appears time and again. One of God's specific purposes for establishing David's throne was to benefit Israel. The blessing of kingship was not for David and his children alone, but for the whole nation (see *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*).

The Chronicler reminded his readers of the benefit of David's throne because David's dynasty was largely responsible for the troubles of exile which Israel endured (see 2 Kgs 21:10-15). Despite this harsh reality, the Chronicler affirmed the unanimous perspective of Israel's great prophets. The blessing of Israel after exile was inextricably tied to the restoration

of the throne of David (see Amos 9:11-15; Isa 55:3; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25). God designed David's royal line to benefit the nation. This divine intention established the need for continuing royal hopes in Israel even in the Chronicler's day.

Jashobeam (11:11b)

Jashobeam is perhaps an alternate spelling for Jasho-Baal (Josheb-basshebeth [2 Sam 23:8]). He appears also in 12:6; 27:2.

Eleazar (11:12-14)

Information about Eleazar appears in a brief four step episode (see figure 11). After an introduction (11:12), the text notes that Eleazar joined David for battle (11:13a). This scene balances with the closing notice that David and Eleazar were victorious (11:14b) because Eleazar stood by David (11:14a). Eleazar found special notice in these lists because of his remarkable courage.

Three Chiefs (11:15-19)

This brief episode consists of five symmetrical steps (see figure 11). The **three of the thirty chiefs** (one of whom was Eleazar [see 11:12]) are first introduced (11:15-16). This introduction balances with the final summation of the passage (11:19b). The story proper involves three simple actions. David longed for water (11:17); the three mighty men retrieved water for David (11:18a); David humbly refused the water (11:18b-19a).

At least two aspects of this passage were particularly significant for the post-exilic community. First, water was retrieved from **Bethlehem** (11:18), the birthplace of David (see 1 Sam 17:12) while Philistines occupied it (11:16). This scenario certainly had symbolic significance for the Chronicler's readers as they reinhabited Bethlehem and other cities recently held under foreign control. It was the supporters of David who had accomplished this great feat in the past. Supporters of David's line in the post-exilic period could hope to accomplish much as well.

Second, David demonstrated humility and piety in his refusal to drink the water. He refused **because they** (the mighty men) **risked their lives** (11:19). While the three men were courageous, David did not encourage such risks for his personal comfort. Instead, he demonstrated his humility by pouring the water **out before the Lord** (11:18). David's actions highlighted the Chronicler's conviction that David's kingship was for Israel's benefit (see

comments on 11:10; see also *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*), and encouraged similar self-denial and religious devotion in the leadership of the post-exilic community (see Neh 5:14-18).

Abishai (11:20-21)

Abishai, Joab's brother, performed Samson-like feats in battle (see Jdg 14:19; 15:15-16). He became the commander of the Three (see 11:15).

Benaiah (11:22-25)

Benaiah showed courage against **Moab's best men** (11:22). Like Samson, he **killed a lion** (11:22; see Jdg 14:5-7). Like David against Goliath, he killed a giant Egyptian warrior whose spear was **like a weaver's rod** (11:23; see 1 Sam 17:7).

Benaiah remained loyal to Solomon during Adonijah's ill-fated attempt to usurp the throne. His zeal for the protection of the Davidic line was later demonstrated in carrying out King Solomon's orders to put traitors (Joab and Shimei) to death (see 1 Kgs 1-2). After Joab's death, Solomon named Benaiah as commander of Israel's army (see 1 Kgs 2:35). **He too was as famous as the three mighty men** (11:24) and probably well-known to the Chronicler's readers. If such a famous man supported David, the post-exilic community should support the Davidic line as well.

List of Mighty Men (11:26-47)

The account of David's leading military supporters at Hebron ends with a long list of names and locations. Although 11:26-41a derives from Samuel, the Chronicler added the final verses (11:41b-47) to emphasize locations outside of Judah. In this way, the list bolstered the Chronicler's insistence that David's reign extended widely. (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes see 2:42-55.). Moreover, all the tribes of Israel submitted themselves to Davidic rule and should do so in the post-exilic period as well (*Introduction: 1) All Israel*).

Military Support at Ziklag (12:1-7)

Having dealt with events in Hebron and Jerusalem, the Chronicler regressed temporarily to an earlier stage in David's life. He referred to the time when David evaded Saul's persecution by joining with the Philistines. The Philistine king Achish gave David the city of

Ziklag (1 Sam 27:6). There he received support from a variety of Israelites. This passage balances with 12:19-22 (see figure 11).

Comparison of 12:1-7 with Samuel

David's times in Ziklag appear in 1 Sam 27:6 - 2 Sam 1:1. The Chronicler's lists of David's supporters, however, have no direct parallels in the book of Samuel.

Structure of 12:1-7

This brief passage divides into two sections (see figure 11). Several remarkable characteristics of David's supporters at Ziklag come into focus (12:1-2). Then the Chronicler lists the names of some of these remarkable men (12:3-7).

Introduction to Ziklag Supporters (12:1-2)

The introduction to this list describes several noteworthy features of these men. 1) They were skilled warriors, able to shoot **right-handed or left-handed** (12:2a). 2) These supporters of David were **kinsmen of Saul from the tribe of Benjamin** (12:2b). 2 Samuel 2-4 describes how some Benjamites resisted David's claim to royalty. Here, however, the Chronicler listed close relatives of Saul who came to David precisely at the time when David **was banished from the presence of Saul** (12:1). David's support from Israel was so widespread that it even included these prominent Benjamites.

List of Ziklag Supporters (12:3-7)

This list contains names of twenty-three Benjamite warriors who supported David. For other examples of Benjamites in favor of David see 12:16,23,29. The Chronicler's reason for introducing this material was to encourage all the tribes, perhaps even hesitant Benjamites, to embrace his Davidic ideals for the post-exilic period.

Military Support at the Stronghold (12:8-18)

This passage moves to an even earlier time when David was in his desert stronghold. There he was joined by Gadites, Benjamites, and Judahites. These materials form the centerpiece of the larger context (see figure 11).

Comparison of 12:8-18 with Samuel

The book of Samuel describes this time in some detail (see 1 Sam 22:3-5; 23:14,29; 24:1), but this material is not paralleled there.

Structure of 12:8-18

The focus on David at his desert stronghold consists of a descriptive list and a brief narrative (see figure 11). The Chronicler's record of David's supporters at Ziklag divides into two main sections. First, a number of Gadite warriors joined David (12:8-15). Second, some Judahites and Benjamites also aligned themselves with David (12:16-18).

Gadite Warriors at the Stronghold (12:8-15)

The record of Gadite warriors joining David overflows with descriptions of their military acumen. They were **brave** (12:8) and skilled in close fighting with **shield and spear** (12:8). They had **the faces of lions** (12:8) and the speed of **gazelles** (12:8). In biblical times it was common to use zoomorphic language to indicate warriors' ferocity.

Beyond this, no enemies could match these Gadites. In hyperbolic language, the Chronicler wrote that the very least Gadite could handle **a hundred** enemies; the best Gadites could withstand **a thousand** (12:14). In this passage it is evident that the Chronicler intentionally used numerical overstatement to exalt the Gadite warriors. On many occasions he drew attention to the magnificence of Israel's military might by using large numbers. For the Chronicler's use of large numbers of soldiers see comments on 12:24-37. He also magnified Israel's devotion to worship in much the same way (see 1 Chr 21:25; 22:3-4,14; 29:7; 2 Chr 1:6; 5:6; 7:5). On two occasions the grandeur of Solomon's kingdom is portrayed in other kinds of numerical hyperbole (see 2 Chr 1:15; 9:23).

The strength and courage of these Gadite warriors is illustrated further by their crossing the **Jordan in the first month** during spring flooding (see Josh 3:15) and their defeating **everyone living in the valleys** (12:15). The Chronicler lavished these praises on the Gadites to make it clear to his readers that the very best of this tribe joined David at the stronghold.

By doing so, the Chronicler idealized David's supporters and encouraged his own readers to join in support of the Davidic line.

Benjamite and Judahite Warriors at the Stronghold (12:16-18)

The record of men from Benjamin and Judah joining David forms a short but fascinating story. The passage begins with warriors approaching David **in his stronghold** (12:16) and ends with the men not only being received by David, but becoming **leaders of his raiding bands** (12:18). This transition occurred through two intervening steps. First, David asked the men if they were for or against him (12:17). Second, the Holy Spirit inspired Amasai to confirm that the warriors from Benjamin and Judah were on David's side (12:18).

The Chronicler explicitly noted that Amasai's words were the result of **the Spirit** (12:18). The Spirit of God came upon people in various ways in the Old Testament (see Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6,19; 15:14; 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6; 16:13; 19:20,23). In the Chronicler's history, however, the Spirit appears five times and serves one basic function (see 1 Chr 12:18; 28:12; 2 Chr 15:1; 20:14; 24:20). In each case the Spirit gave special insight and authorized the words of the person upon whom he came. In one other scenario, a "lying spirit" also proceeded from the heaven and caused prophets to lie (see 2 Chr 18:21-23). In this passage, the Spirit inspired Amasai to compose a prophetic poem which vindicated the actions of the Benjamite and Judahite defectors. By including this divinely inspired speech, the Chronicler once again noted God's hand behind Israel's history (see 10:13-14; 11:3,9-10,14; 12:23; 14:2; see also Divine Involvement in History).

An allusion to this passage appears later in Chronicles. The words of Amasai in support of David stand in sharp contrast with the words of northern Israelites as they rebelled against the house of David in the days of Rehoboam (see 2 Chr 10:18).

A central concern of Amasai's speech emerges in the threefold repetition of the word **help**. David asked if the men will **help** him (12:17). Amasai responded that **God will help** David, and that **those who help** David will share in his **success** (12:18). Divine help for the Davidic kings and their supporters is a distinctive theme in the book of Chronicles (see 1 Chr 5:20; 12:18; 15:26; 2 Chr 14:11; 16:12; 18:31; 20:4; 26:7; 32:8; see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). The Chronicler's post-exilic readers lived with many political uncertainties. The Chronicler knew that the only hope for the struggling nation was help from God. Through this episode, he reminded his readers that God's help against enemies was promised to David's family and those who supported it.

More Military Support at Ziklag (12:19-22)

Now moving forward in time, the Chronicler returned to Ziklag. This passage balances with the previous material on Ziklag (12:1-7; see figure 11). In this passage, the Chronicler focused on a group of Manassehites who joined David.

Comparison of 12:19-22 with Samuel

This passage has no parallel in the book of Samuel. The historical circumstances it describes appear in 1 Sam 27 - 2 Sam 1:1.

Structure of 12:19-22

This short section divides into three parts (see figure 11). An introduction (12:19) and final report (12:21-22) enclose the list of Manassehites supporting David (12:20).

Introduction to Manassehite Supporters (12:19)

The Chronicler began this section with an historical note and explanation. These Manassehites joined with David as he fought with the Philistines **against Saul** (12:19). David's association with Philistines raised the possibility of serious misunderstanding. As the prophets before him (see Isa 30-31; 36-39), the Chronicler frequently warned that military alliances with other nations would result in destruction (see *Introduction: 3) International Relations*). As a result, he noted that David and his band **did not help the Philistines** (12:19). David's time with the Philistines offered no support for post-exilic readers who may have sought inappropriate alliances with foreign powers.

List of Manassehite Supporters (12:20)

The Chronicler listed the names of seven men from Manasseh who **defected to David** (12:20). He stressed the prominence of these men by noting that they were **leaders of units of a thousand** (12:20). This precise numerical designation of the word translated "thousand" is uncertain and presents problems for the interpretation of many passages. (For the Chronicler's use of large numbers of soldiers see comments on 12:24-37.) However one understands the numerical designation here, it is evident that these men were significant military leaders in their tribe.

Closing Remarks on Manassehite Supporters (12:21-22)

The closing remarks of this section consist of several reports illustrating the courage of David's Manassehite supporters. **All of them were brave warriors** (12:21). They ranked among the other outstanding men following David (see 11:10-11a,20-25; 12:1-7). Beyond this, their numbers grew **day after day** during the time at Ziklag (12:22).

Having mentioned the quality and quantity of David's army, the Chronicler reported that by this time David's army had become **like the army of God** (12:22). Throughout the Old Testament, God revealed himself as the leader of an innumerable and invincible army of heaven (see Exod 15:1-13; Judg 4:12-24; 1 Sam 17:26,36; 2 Kgs 6:17; Isa 13:4; 26:7-14; Joel 2:11; Zech 9:14-17; 10:3-5). Undoubtedly, this comparison between David's army and God's army is a hyperbole, designed to indicate that David had an army greater than could be imagined. (For a summary of the Chronicler's use of hyperbole see comments on 1 Chr 12:14.) The Chronicler stressed the wonder of David's army to inspire his post-exilic readers to admire the Davidic line and yearn for this kind of army in their day as well.

More Support at Hebron (12:23-37)

In parallel with 11:10-47 (see figure 11) the Chronicler returned to David's supporters at Hebron. In this passage he primarily concerned himself with ordinary soldiers.

Comparison of 12:23-37 with Samuel

Only tangential connections exist between this material and Samuel.

Structure of 12:23-37

This passage consists of two distinguishable parts (see figure 11). A lengthy list (12:24-37) is preceded by an introduction (12:23).

Introduction to Supporters at Hebron (12:23)

The introduction to this list identifies **Hebron** as the place of concern (12:23). It also expresses the Chronicler's conviction that the transfer of power to David was not of human

design, but was **as the Lord had said** (see 10:13-14; 11:3,9-10,14; 12:18; 14:2; see also Divine Involvement in History).

Lists of Supporters from All Tribes (12:24-37)

In a fashion common to this portion of his history, the Chronicler described the outstanding features of David's supporters (see 11:10-11a; 11:20-25; 12:1-7). They were **ready for battle** (12:25,35), **brave** (12:26,30), **wise** (12:32), **prepared for battle** (12:33,36), **with undivided loyalty** (12:33), **experienced** (12:36), and bearing **shield and spear** (12:24,34) and **every type of weapon** (12:33,37). These facts were designed to encourage admiration for David's men.

This list of supporters at Hebron is considerably broader than any preceding lists in several ways. First, it includes representatives from all the tribes (acknowledging the distinction between Ephraim and Manasseh). By grouping the Transjordanian tribes (see 12:37), however, the Chronicler maintained the traditional number of twelve tribes.

Second, the breadth of perspective also comes into view in its focus on ordinary fighting men. The material primarily concerns David's supporters among common soldiers.

Third, this passage presents an interpretive problem that appears a number of times in Chronicles. Here the Chronicler indicated the size of David's support by listing the numbers of men involved. Taken at face value, the count seems terribly high for David's initial advocates.

As with similar passages throughout Chronicles, at least three explanations of these large numbers are possible (compare 1 Chr 21:5; 23:3; 2 Chr 11:1; 13:3; 14:8,9; 17:14-18; 25:5,11,12; 26:12-13; 28:6,8). 1) The Hebrew word translated **thousand** (12:24) may have been a technical term referring to units considerably less than 1,000. If this were the case in this passage, the numbers would be indefinite. For instance, 12:24 would read, "men of Judah, carrying shield and spear -six units with 800 armed for battle." 2) The vowels of the Hebrew term for **thousand** in the traditional Hebrew text may be slightly emended and read "chiefs." If so, the numbers are greatly reduced. For example, 12:24 would be translated "six chiefs with 800 armed for battle." 3) It is possible that the Chronicler used hyperbole to stress the grandeur of David's support (see 12:22). The Chronicler frequently employed hyperbole. For a summary of the Chronicler's use of hyperbole see comments on 1 Chr 12:14.

None of these viewpoints mitigate against the historical reliability of the Chronicler's report. His point was that the number of men with David at Hebron was extremely large. No meager faction of Israelites was involved in the transfer of royal power to David. Mentioning large and skilled armies is one way in which the Chronicler often exalted faithful kings (see 1 Chr; 21:15; 27:1-15; 2 Chr 13:13; 17:12-19; 25:5-6; 26:13).

Through this broad list of David's supporters at Hebron, the Chronicler displayed his concern for unanimous commitment to the Davidic line in his own day. In the ideal period of David's reign, large numbers from all the tribes joined with the king. All of Israel should support the throne of David after the exile as well (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*).

More on the Anointing at Hebron (12:38-40)

The Chronicler closed his survey of David's widespread support by returning to the anointing at Hebron. This material balances with 11:1-3 (see figure 11).

Comparison of 12:38-40 with Samuel

The first account of events at Hebron (see 11:1-3) originated in the book of Samuel, but this passage (12:38-40) is entirely from the Chronicler's hand. It ties together a number of themes that characterize this entire account of David's national support.

Structure of 12:38-40

This material divides into a simple two step narrative (see figure 11). The two actions are straightforward. The people plan to anoint David (12:38). Then they celebrate after his anointing (12:39-40). The actual ceremony of anointing recorded in 11:1-3 occurred between these two steps.

Widespread Determination to Anoint David (12:38)

The first portion of this passage highlights Israel's desire to make David their king. The **fighting men** were **firmly determined** to have David be king, not just over a portion of God's people, but **over all Israel** (12:38a; see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). This desire, however, was not limited to the warriors. **All the rest of the Israelites** agreed to the plan as well (12:38b). Here the Chronicler emphasized the cooperation of the fighting men and the general population. His purpose is evident. Every sector of post-exilic Israel should join in supporting the re-establishment of the Davidic throne in their day.

Widespread Celebration of David's Anointing (12:39-40)

The second step of this short episode concerns the joyful results of David's anointing. The people and David celebrated for **three days** (12:39). This lengthy festival of eating and drinking was possible because **their families** had provided in abundance (12:39). Moreover, people **from as far away as Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali** also traveled to Hebron with food (12:40). Representatives of the whole nation joined in the celebration by contributing an assortment of foods. The Chronicler highlighted the splendor of the time by mentioning **flour, fig cakes, raising cakes, wine, oil, cattle and sheep** (12:40). This wonderful celebration took place because **there was joy in Israel** (12:40).

The Chronicler frequently reported events of joy and celebration in his history (see *Introduction: 27) Disappointment and Celebration*). These occasions of national happiness spoke directly to the needs of the Chronicler's post-exilic readers. For the most part, their experiences were far from joyful. Hardship and trouble characterized Israel after returning from Babylon (see Hag 1:5-11; Ezra 4:1-5:17; Neh 4:1-6;14). The Chronicler included these scenes of celebration to motivate his readers. If they wanted to enjoy such festivities in their day, they needed to imitate the actions which led to celebration in the past. In this passage, David's anointing brought immeasurable joy to the nation. The restored community should yearn for the re-establishment of David's throne so that such joy could abound again in their day.