**1 Chronicles 21-24**

David Counts the Fighting Men

**21**Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. **2**So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, “Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are.” **3**But Joab replied, “May the Lord multiply his troops a hundred times over. My lord the king, are they not all my lord’s subjects? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?”

**4**The king’s word, however, overruled Joab; so Joab left and went throughout Israel and then came back to Jerusalem. **5**Joab reported the number of the fighting men to David: In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who could handle a sword, including four hundred and seventy thousand in Judah.

**6**But Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, because the king’s command was repulsive to him. **7**This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.

**8**Then David said to God, “I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.” The Lord said to Gad, David’s seer, **10**“Go and tell David, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.’”

**11**So Gad went to David and said to him, “This is what the Lord says: ‘Take your choice: **12**three years of famine, three months of being swept away before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the Lord - days of plague in the land, with the angel of the Lord ravaging every part of Israel.’ Now then, decide how I should answer the one who sent me.”

**13**David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for HIS mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into human hands.”

**14**So the Lord sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. **15**And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the Lord saw it and relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was destroying the people, “Enough! Withdraw your hand.” The angel of the Lord was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

**16**David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell facedown. **17**David said to God, “Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I, the shepherd, have sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Lord my God, let your hand fall on me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people.”

David Builds an Altar

**18**Then the angel of the Lord ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.**19**So David went up in obedience to the word that Gad had spoken in the name of the Lord. **20**While Araunah was threshing wheat, he turned and saw the angel; his four sons who were with him hid themselves. **21**Then David approached, and when Araunah looked and saw him, he left the threshing floor and bowed down before David with his face to the ground.

**22**David said to him, “Let me have the site of your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price.” **23**Araunah said to David, “Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this.”

**24**But King David replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing.” **25**So David paid Araunah six hundred (600) shekels of gold for the site. **26**David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the Lord, and the Lord answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

**27**Then the Lord spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. **28**At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he offered sacrifices there. **29**The tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time on the high place at Gibeon. **30**But David could not go before it to inquire of God, because he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord.

**22**Then David said, “The house of the Lord God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel.”

Preparations for the Temple

**2**So David gave orders to assemble the foreigners residing in Israel, and from among them he appointed stonecutters to prepare dressed stone for building the house of God. **3**He provided a large amount of iron to make nails for the doors of the gateways and for the fittings, and more bronze than could be weighed. **4**He also provided more cedar logs than could be counted, for the Sidonians and Tyrians had brought large numbers of them to David.

**5**David said, “My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations. Therefore I will make preparations for it.” So David made extensive preparations before his death.

**6**Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the Lord, the God of Israel. **7**David said to Solomon: “My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the Name of the Lord my God. **8**But this word of the Lord came to me: ‘You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight. **9**But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon, and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. **10**He is the one who will build a house for my Name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.’

**11**“Now, my son, the Lord be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the Lord your God, as he said you would. **12**May the Lord give you discretion and understanding when He puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the Lord your God. **13**Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the Lord gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

**14**“I have taken great pains to provide for the temple of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver, quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone. And you may add to them. **15**You have many workers: stonecutters, masons and carpenters, as well as those skilled in every kind of work **16**in gold and silver, bronze and iron - craftsmen beyond number. Now begin the work, and the Lord be with you.”

**17**Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon.**18**He said to them, “Is not the Lord your God with you? And has he not granted you rest on every side? For he has given the inhabitants of the land into my hands, and the land is subject to the Lord and to his people. **19**Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the Lord your God. Begin to build the sanctuary of the Lord God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the sacred articles belonging to God into the temple that will be built for the Name of the Lord.”

The Levites

**23**When David was old and full of years, he made his son Solomon king over Israel. **2**He also gathered together all the leaders of Israel, as well as the priests and Levites. **3**The Levites thirty years old or more were counted, and the total number of men was thirty-eight thousand. **4**David said, “Of these, twenty-four thousand are to be in charge of the work of the temple of the Lord and six thousand are to be officials and judges.**5**Four thousand are to be gatekeepers and four thousand are to praise the Lord with the musical instruments I have provided for that purpose.” **6**David separated the Levites into divisions corresponding to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

Gershonites

**7**Belonging to the Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei.

**8**The sons of Ladan: Jehiel the first, Zetham and Joel - three in all.

**9**The sons of Shimei: Shelomoth, Haziel and Haran - three in all. These were the heads of the families of Ladan.

**10**And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Ziza, Jeush and Beriah. These were the sons of Shimei - four in all.

**11**Jahath was the first and Ziza the second, but Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons; so they were counted as one family with one assignment.

Kohathites

**12**The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel - four in all.

**13**The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. Aaron was set apart, he and his descendants forever, to consecrate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices before the Lord, to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in his name forever. **14**The sons of Moses the man of God were counted as part of the tribe of Levi.

**15**The sons of Moses: Gershom and Eliezer.

**16**The descendants of Gershom: Shubael was the first.

**17**The descendants of Eliezer: Rehabiah was the first. Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very numerous.

**18**The sons of Izhar: Shelomith was the first.

**19**The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the fourth.

**20**The sons of Uzziel: Micah the first and Ishiah the second.

Merarites

**21**The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. **22**Eleazar died without having sons: he had only daughters. Their cousins, the sons of Kish, married them. **23**The sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth - three in all.

**24**These were the descendants of Levi by their families - the heads of families as they were registered under their names and counted individually, that is, the workers twenty years old or more who served in the temple of the Lord. **25**For David had said, “Since the Lord, the God of Israel, has granted rest to his people and has come to dwell in Jerusalem forever, **26**the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the articles used in its service.” **27**According to the last instructions of David, the Levites were counted from those twenty years old or more.

**28**The duty of the Levites was to help Aaron’s descendants in the service of the temple of the Lord: to be in charge of the courtyards, the side rooms, the purification of all sacred things and the performance of other duties at the house of God. **29**They were in charge of the bread set out on the table, the special flour for the grain offerings, the thin loaves made without yeast, the baking and the mixing, and all measurements of quantity and size. **30**They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. They were to do the same in the evening **31**and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the Lord on the Sabbaths, at the New Moon feasts and at the appointed festivals. They were to serve before the Lord regularly in the proper number and in the way prescribed for them. **32**And so the Levites carried out their responsibilities for the tent of meeting, for the Holy Place and, under their relatives the descendants of Aaron, for the service of the temple of the Lord.

The Divisions of Priests

**24**These were the divisions of the descendants of Aaron: The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. **2**But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did, and they had no sons; so Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests. **3**With the help of Zadok a descendant of Eleazar and Ahimelek a descendant of Ithamar, David separated them into divisions for their appointed order of ministering. **4**A larger number of leaders were found among Eleazar’s descendants than among Ithamar’s, and they were divided accordingly: sixteen heads of families from Eleazar’s descendants and eight heads of families from Ithamar’s descendants. **5**They divided them impartially by casting lots,for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of God among the descendants of both Eleazar and Ithamar.

**6**The scribe Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite, recorded their names in the presence of the king and of the officials: Zadok the priest, Ahimelekson of Abiathar and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites—one family being taken from Eleazar and then one from Ithamar.

**7**The first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, **8**the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, **9**the fifth to Malkijah, the sixth to Mijamin, **10**the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, **11**the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shekaniah, **12**the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, **13**the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, **14**the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, **15**the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez, **16**the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel, **17**the twenty-first to Jakin, the twenty-second to Gamul, **18**the twenty-third to Delaiah and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

**19**This was their appointed order of ministering when they entered the temple of the Lord, according to the regulations prescribed for them by their ancestor Aaron, as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

The Rest of the Levites

**20**As for the rest of the descendants of Levi: from the sons of Amram: Shubael; from the sons of Shubael: Jehdeiah. **21**As for Rehabiah, from his sons: Ishiah was the first. **22**From the Izharites: Shelomoth; from the sons of Shelomoth: Jahath. **23**The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the first,[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Chronicles+21-24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-11039i)] Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the fourth. **24**The son of Uzziel: Micah; from the sons of Micah: Shamir. **25**The brother of Micah: Ishiah; from the sons of Ishiah: Zechariah. **26**The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The son of Jaaziah: Beno. **27**The sons of Merari: from Jaaziah: Beno, Shoham, Zakkur and Ibri. **28**From Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. **29**From Kish: the son of Kish: Jerahmeel. **30**And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth. These were the Levites, according to their families. **31**They also cast lots, just as their relatives the descendants of Aaron did, in the presence of King David and of Zadok, Ahimelek, and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites. The families of the oldest brother were treated the same as those of the youngest.