

## 1 Kings 4

Verses 1 - 6

Now King Solomon was king over all Israel. <sup>2</sup> These were his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok was the priest; <sup>3</sup> Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha were secretaries; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder; <sup>4</sup> and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the army; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests; <sup>5</sup> and Azariah the son of Nathan was over the deputies; and Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest, was the king's friend; <sup>6</sup> and Ahishar was over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the men subject to forced labor.

<sup>4</sup> and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the army; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

We know that Abiathar was dismissed from his position as High priest over the Ark in Jerusalem in the not too distant past.

See 1 Kings 2:26-27

<sup>26</sup> Then to Abiathar the priest the king said, "Go to Anathoth to your own field, for you deserve to die; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord God before my father David, and because you were afflicted in everything with which my father was afflicted." <sup>27</sup> So Solomon dismissed Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, to fulfill the word of the Lord, which He had spoken regarding the house of Eli in Shiloh.

This list of officials reflects those who were serving at the beginning of his reign so Abiathar is included even though he is no longer serving. Not every detail in a narrative needs to be written in chronological order.

<sup>5</sup> and Azariah the son of Nathan was over the deputies; and Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest, was the king's friend;

Scholars disagree on whether this Nathan is the prophet by that name or David's son. The reason this is unclear is because the word translated priest can also mean a high officer. Therefore, the Nathan mentioned here would not have to be from the tribe of Levi.

<sup>6</sup> and Ahishar was over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the men subject to forced labor.

The term household is a euphemism for haram.

Verses 7 - 19

<sup>7</sup> Solomon had twelve deputies over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each *deputy* had to provide food for a month in the year. <sup>8</sup> And these *were* their names: **Ben-hur**, in the hill country of Ephraim; <sup>9</sup> **Ben-deker** in Makaz and Shaalbim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elonbeth-hanan; <sup>10</sup> **Ben-hesed** in Arubboth (Socoh was his and all the land of Hopher); <sup>11</sup> **Ben-abinadab** in all the hills of Dor (Taphath the daughter of Solomon was his wife); <sup>12</sup> **Baana** the son of Ahilud *in* Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah as far as the other side of Jokmeam; <sup>13</sup> **Ben-geber** in Ramoth-gilead (the villages of Jair, the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead were his: the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars were his); <sup>14</sup> **Ahinadab** the son of Iddo *in* Mahanaim; <sup>15</sup> **Ahimaaz** in Naphtali (he also married Basemath the daughter of Solomon); <sup>16</sup> **Baana** the son of Hushai in Asher and Bealoth; <sup>17</sup> **Jehoshaphat** the son of Paruah in Issachar; <sup>18</sup> **Shimei** the son of Ela in Benjamin; <sup>19</sup> **Geber** the son of Uri in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan; and *he was* the only deputy who *was* in the land.

<sup>7</sup> Solomon had twelve deputies over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each *deputy* had to provide food for a month in the year.

These 12 men were the tax collectors in Israel. They collected the taxes (money and or supplies) needed to support the government of Solomon.

5 of the 12 names begin with “Ben” which has the meaning “son of” or “Boy of”.

<sup>13</sup> **Ben-geber** in Ramoth-gilead (the villages of Jair, the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead were his: the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars were his);

Ramoth-gilead was one of the chief cities on the east side of the Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, allotted to the Levites and appointed a city of refuge.

Verses 20 - 25

<sup>20</sup> Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; *they* were eating and drinking and rejoicing. <sup>21</sup> Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; *they* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. <sup>22</sup> Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour and sixty kors of meal, <sup>23</sup> ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, a hundred sheep besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl. <sup>24</sup> For he had dominion over everything west of the River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River; and he had peace on all sides around about him. <sup>25</sup> So Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

<sup>22</sup> Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour and sixty kors of meal, <sup>23</sup> ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, a hundred sheep besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl.

The provisions listed here for 1 day could feed 14,000 people.

A month's provisions would equal 5,000 bushels of flour, 10,000 bushels of meal, 900 oxen, and 3,000 sheep.

Annually that would require 36,500 sheep, about 11,000 oxen and enough flour to make 10.5 million pounds of bread.

With all of the nations between the Euphrates River and Egypt paying tribute to Solomon, they were indeed living the good life. However, the financial burden of all that extravagance eventually caught up with the people of Israel.

<sup>21</sup> Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; *they* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life

<sup>24</sup> For he had dominion over everything west of the River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River; and he had peace on all sides around about him.

See map 405



Verses 26 - 28

<sup>26</sup> Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. <sup>27</sup> And those deputies provided food for King Solomon and all who came to King Solomon's table, each in his month; they allowed nothing to be lacking. <sup>28</sup> They also brought barley and straw for the *war* horses and baggage horses to the place where it was *required*, each *deputy* according to his duty.

<sup>26</sup> Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

The number of stalls is in question.

See 2 Chronicles 9:25

<sup>25</sup> Now Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

The number of Solomon's stalls in this account is 4,000.

There is a similar problem in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel where it says the Philistines brought 3,000 chariots into battle but other manuscripts (and versions) say 30,000.

See 1 Samuel 13:5

<sup>5</sup> The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Mikmash, east of Beth Aven.

Verses 29 - 34

<sup>29</sup> Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. <sup>30</sup> Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. <sup>31</sup> For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was *known* in all the surrounding nations. <sup>32</sup> He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. <sup>33</sup> He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish. <sup>34</sup> Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

**<sup>29</sup> Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. <sup>30</sup> Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.**

His wisdom surpassed the knowledge of all the nations around Israel.

**<sup>32</sup> He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. <sup>33</sup> He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish.**

Some of his proverbs have survived in the Book of Proverbs however little is known about his songs. We only have the Song of Solomon, Psalms 72; Psalms 132; and Psalms 127.

Solomon's wisdom was not limited to "an understanding heart to judge God's people, to discern between good and evil". He also had some advanced knowledge about agriculture and the animal kingdom.