

David Took Seven Thousand Horsemen

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David Took Seven Hundred Horsemen
(*2 Samuel 8:4*)

David Took Seven Thousand Horsemen
(*1 Chronicles 18:4*)

It is amazing that Almighty God would allow feeble mankind to translate and copy His word, knowing that errors would occur (Ps. 103:14; 1Cor. 1:25). However, this confirms that God is more than willing to work with fallible human beings to help them attain a greater understanding of His truth, providing they have a respectful attitude toward Him.

...But on this one will I (God) look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word (Isa. 66:2b; cf. Ps. 34:18; 51:17; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).



DAVID TOOK FROM HIM (KING OF ZOBAB) ONE THOUSAND CHARIOTS, SEVEN THOUSAND HORSEMAN, AND TWENTY THOUSAND FOOT SOLDIERS.

I Chronicles 18:4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added

In a previous study entitled, "It Was Not Seven Years, but Three Years of Famine", it was shown that translators made errors as multiple copies of God's word were produced by hand. This was a difficult task no matter how skilled a writer, or scribe was. Therefore, mistakes were bound to happen. This principle applies again in the apparent contradiction involving the two scriptures mentioned above. However, with a careful analysis of the texts, it is possible to

arrive at a more accurate understanding of what the original Hebrew was intended to say.

David took from him (Hadadezer) one thousand chariots, seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstringed all the chariot horses, except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots (2Sam. 8:4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

E.W. Bullinger's comments on the seven hundred horsemen is as follows.

'The Hebrew for 7 and 700 are easily mistaken one for the other. See note on 1Kings 4:26' (The Companion Bible; p 418).

'The ancient Hebrew characters (representing numbers) were Phoenician, and may be seen on the Moabite Stone. These were in current use till about 140 B.C., and were gradually replaced by the modern Hebrew "square characters." Mistakes in copying occurred through the similarity of certain letters' (The Companion Bible; p 454; commentary on 1Kgs. 4:26).

As most armies in the region would have had similar equipment and ratios of chariots to horsemen, it is reasonable to conclude that David's battle against the Syrian army would represent ratios close to those in his battle against the king of Zobah (2Sam. 8:3).

Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there (2Sam. 10:18).

In David's battle against the Syrians, there was only a difference of three hundred charioteers when compared to the battle against the king of Zobah. However, if 2Samuel 8:4 is translated as having only seven hundred horsemen, it is

dramatically less than those in the battle against the Syrians. Therefore, it is likely that 2Samuel 8:4 should have been translated the same as 1Chronicles 18:4.

David took from him (king of Zobah) one thousand chariots, **seven thousand horsemen**, and twenty thousand foot soldiers (1Chr. 18:4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The error on the part of one or more translators seems to be the text in 2Samuel 8:4 based on comparing the ratios of horsemen with 2Samuel 10:18. Therefore, instead of God contradicting His own word, any discrepancy between 2Samuel 8:4 and 1Chronicles 18:4 is due to the human error of one or more scribes involved with providing hand written copies of God's word.

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