

1 Chronicles Chapter 25

Verses 1-31

David, the sweet psalmist of Israel (2 Sam. 23:1), established music as a central feature in the worship of God.

1 Chronicles 25:1 "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was:"

“The captains of the host”:

David relied on his mighty men for help (11:10).

“Asaph ... Heman ... Jeduthun”:

David’s 3 chief ministers of music (6:31-48).

“Prophesy”:

This is not necessarily to be taken in a revelatory sense, but rather in the sense of proclamation and exhortation through the lyrics of their music (compare 25:2-3).

Prophesying is not necessarily predicting the future or even speaking direct revelation.

It is proclaiming truth (verse 5), to people (compare 1 Cor. 14:3), and music is a vehicle for such proclamation is praise (verse 3).

David and the leaders selected those most capable (verse 7), of leading the people to worship God through their music.

David appointed the three sons of “Asaph, Heman,” and “Jeduthun”, all descendants of Levi, to be musicians.

The word “prophesy” seems to elevate their musical praise to the same level as an authoritative word from the mouth of a prophet.

Music was an important component of worship in the day of David.

The Levitical musicians were also organized by “David,” who was greatly concerned for the ministry of music in the worship services (6:31-48; 15:16-24; 16:4-7, 37, 41-42; 23:5).

For “Asaph, Herman,” and “Jeduthun” (see the note on 6:31-48).

These too, were divided by lot into 24 courses (verses 9-31), corresponding to those of the priest and Levites (Chapter 24).

David knew the value of worship with song and praise.

The men in the verse above, are descendants of Asaph, who were called to prophecy with musical accompaniment.

This might seem strange to you on the surface, but it is not.

The book of Psalms are songs, but they are possibly, some of the best prophecies in the Bible as well.

We discussed in previous lessons, that not all ministry involves preaching.

Songs, spiritual music, and praise are all part of worship as well.

1 Chronicles 25:2 "Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied according to the order of the king."

Who were separated, and by lot appointed, to the service of singers in the temple.

"Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah":

Called Jesharelah (1 Chron. 25:14), these had the third fourth, fifth, and seventh lots (1 Chron. 25:9), under the hands of Asaph; under his instruction and authority.

"Which prophesied according to the order of the king":

Which Asaph composed psalms under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and was ordered by King David to sing them, and by whose command they were inserted in the book of Psalms, where they now stand with his name to them.

Asaph actually wrote 12 of the Psalms, himself.

He was a prophet of God, but he did his prophesying in song.

Some of the most beautiful messages in the church today come from Hymns like "Amazing Grace".

It appears, that Asaph prophesied to David privately.

1 Chronicles 25:3 "Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD."

Or Ethan, the sons of Jeduthun.

"Gedaliah and Zeri":

called Izri (1 Chron. 25:11).

"And Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six": Whereas five only are mentioned; it may be thought that Shimei (1 Chron. 25:17), is the sixth, he not being mentioned elsewhere.

It is a tradition of the Jews, that his mother was now with child of him, and it being foreseen by the Holy Spirit that he would be the chief of a course.

The number six is given, as Jarchi observes.

But rather, as Kimchi, he was young, and not fit to sing, yet was chosen the head of a course, until he was grown up and fit for it.

To these six came up the second, fourth, eighth, twelfth, fourteenth, and tenth lots (1 Chron. 25:9), and these were;

"Under the hands of their father Jeduthun":

To instruct and direct them, and appoint their service to them.

"Who prophesied with a harp":

Or sung a prophetic psalm or hymn on that.

"To give thanks and to praise the LORD":

For what he had done and promised, and foretold he would do for his people.

Jeduthun was of the family of Merari.

He was one of the masters of the sacred music.

His name means praise, or praising.

He is sometimes called Ethan.

In 2 Chronicles 35:15, he is called the king's seer.

The other six mentioned here, are his sons.

His prophecy was associated with music.

1 Chronicles 25:4 "Of Heman: the sons of Heman; Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, [and] Mahazioth:"

The third chief singer.

"Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel; the same with Azareel (1 Chron. 25:18).

"Shebuel":

Called Shubael (1 Chron. 25:20).

"And Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth":

In all fourteen, to whom came the sixth, ninth, eleventh, fifteenth, sixteenth, eighteenth, twentieth, twenty second, twenty fourth, seventeenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty third lots (1 Chron. 25:13).

1 Chronicles 25:5 "All these [were] the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters."

“Seer”: A term used to describe a prophet in that he knew and understood the ways and will of God.

God blessed “Heman” with 17 children, all musicians.

No doubt his house always resounded with some song of worship, whether sung aloud or played on an instrument.

This is probably, the same Heman (in the 88th Psalm).

He had fourteen sons and three daughters, who followed in their father's call to ministry.

He was also a seer.

He was an inspired musician of sacred music.

His specialty seemed to be on the horn.

1 Chronicles 25:6 "All these [were] under the hands of their father for song [in] the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman."

Instructed and directed by him in the performance of the service in the temple.

"With cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God":

Which were the three principal instruments of music used in the temple service.

"According to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman":

Who ordered and directed them what to sing, what tunes to make use of, and what instruments to play upon to those tunes.

All of these mentioned in the previous verses of this lesson, ministered in music, song, and prophecy in the temple.

There is a list of the various instruments they played in the verse above.

As we said earlier, David was aware of the value of inspired music and song in the worship services, and was setting all of this up for the worship in the temple when Solomon builds it.

1 Chronicles 25:7 "So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, [even] all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight."

David apparently instituted a music school of sorts, developing both the skill and the worship sense of these chosen musicians.

The musicians likely served on a rotating schedule so that all 288 were not playing together at the same time.

The number 288 reflects a design of 12 singers for each of the 24 groups (listed in 25:9-31).

David designed worship to be orderly (1 Cor. 14:40), and honoring to God.

Apparently, there were some 288 master musicians.

1 Chronicles 23:5, lists some four thousand musicians in all.

Therefore, since both master musicians and the lesser musicians (perhaps pupils), were available for the drawing of lots for duty in the 24 courses of service at the temple (verse 8), probably some of each level of musicians served in each of the courses.

These 288 not only understood music and song, but taught others in the spiritual value of the Psalms.

It was then and is now, a very integral part of worship to have spiritual music and song prepare your heart to receive the message God has for His followers.

They were taught themselves, in this special ministry, and they would teach others who came later.

1 Chronicles 25:8 "And they cast lots, ward against [ward], as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar."

That is, which ward or course of the singers should answer to and attend on the first ward or course of the priests in their weekly service, and which the second, and so on.

"As well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar":

No regard was had to the age of a person, his being the firstborn or a younger brother, or to his office and station.

Whether as a teacher or a learner in the science of singing; he was made the head of a course, as the lot came up.

And it may easily be observed, by comparing the lots in the following verses with the sons of the chief singers, according to the order of them in (1 Chron. 25:2), that the younger is often preferred in the courses by lot to the elder.

Of which even the first lot is an instance.

This casting of the lots was to determine when they should minister in the temple.

There seemed to be 24 who took the lead.

Each of these 24 had 11 people under them.

The one mentioned was the teacher with 11 scholars they trained.

Verses 9-31

The musicians were divided up into 24 divisions (corresponding to that of the priests (24:4-18), of 12 musicians each, for a total of 288.

These would give leadership to the 4,000 instrumentalists (23:5).

1 Chronicles 25:9 "Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph: the second to Gedaliah, who with his brethren and sons [were] twelve:"

His second son to the preference of the firstborn (1 Chron. 25:2).

"The second to Gedaliah, who with his brethren and sons were twelve":

And which must also be understood of Joseph, and supplied to him.

For those being both in one verse, as Jarchi observes, it is but once mentioned, but must be supplied, or otherwise the number of two hundred and eighty eight could not be made up.

The same is observed of all the other lots and courses to the end of the chapter as here.

1 Chronicles 25:10 "The third to Zaccur, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

Literally, The third, Zaccur and his sons and his brethren.

"Twelve":

The same mode of expression is used down to (1 Chron. 25:18), except in (1 Chron. 25:11), which reads: "The fourth for the Izrite, his sons and his brethren, twelve."

The Izrite (not "Izri") is a Gentile name, and seems to denote a family rather than a person.

1 Chronicles 25:11 "The fourth to Izri, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"Izri":

See note on Zeri 1 Chron. 25:3.

1 Chronicles 25:12 "The fifth to Nethaniah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The sixth to Bukkiah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The seventh to Jesharelah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The eighth to Jeshaiiah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The ninth to Mattaniah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The tenth to Shimei, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The eleventh to Azareel, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The twelfth to Hashabiah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The thirteenth to Shubael, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

(In verse 17), "Shimei":

Omitted by accident from 1 Chron. 25:3.

(In verse 18) "Azareel":

Called Uzziel in (1 Chron. 25:4), compare Azariah as a variant of Uzziah (1 Chron. 3:12, and 2 Chron. 26:1).

In verse 20:

“The thirteenth to Shubael”:

The Hebrew is, to thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his brethren, twelve; and so in the next verse.

The meaning seems to be: “as to, or as regards, the thirteenth”.

Shubael (Shebuel) has occurred before (1 Chron. 23:16; 24:20).

This is a list of the choirs.

They did not all sing and play at once.

The one at the beginning of the list would take the first duty and then on down the line, until each group had served their time in the service of the LORD, then it would begin at the beginning again.

The following Scriptures are still part of the listing of the singers and musicians who ministered in the music.

Mattithiah (see 1 Chronicles 15:18, 21).

No other of these twenty-four names is found elsewhere out of this chapter in the history, a just indication of the trustworthiness rather than the contrary of this table.

1 Chronicles 25:21-31

"The fourteenth to Mattithiah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The fifteenth to Jeremoth, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The sixteenth to Hananiah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The seventeenth to Joshbekashah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The eighteenth to Hanani, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The nineteenth to Mallothi, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The twentieth to Eliathah, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The one and twentieth to Hothir, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The two and twentieth to Giddalti, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The three and twentieth to Mahazioth, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve:"

"The four and twentieth to Romamti-ezer, [he], his sons, and his brethren, [were] twelve."

In verse 22: "The fifteenth to Jeremoth":

Hebrew, to fifteenth, to Jeremoth.

I.e., as regards the fifteenth lot, it was for Jeremoth.

The construction is the same to the end of the chapter.

Spelling, and probably pronunciation, fluctuated between Jeremoth and Jerimoth (1 Chron. 25:4).

Compare (1 Chron. 23:23; 24:30).

The LXX and Vulgate spell "Jerimoth" in both places here; Syriac, "Jarmûth"; Arabic, "Jārāmāth" and "Jarmûth."

In verses 31:

An analysis of the whole list shows that the first, third, fifth, and seventh places fell to the four Asaphite guilds, or clans.

The second, fourth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, and fourteenth to the six guilds of the sons of Jeduthun, or Ethanites.

The sixth, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, and the remaining ten places, to the fourteen guilds of Heman.

It appears evident that all the lots were thrown into a single urn, and that the Asaphite and Ethanite names were all drawn, as the chances made it likely, before the Hemanites were exhausted.

As it happened, only Hemanite names were left after the fourteenth drawing.

The 24 groups of twelve each make up the 288 mentioned earlier.

The number "12" means a representative of the whole.

These 288 would furnish the ministry in music and song for the temple.

They would be well trained in their behavior in the temple, as well as their ministry.

They would each take their turns ministering in the temple.

The ministry of music and song descended from generation to generation, just like the priesthood did.

1 Chronicles Chapter 25 Questions

1. In verse 1, we find that the sons of Asaph were separated out to do what?
2. What is said about their music that is unusual?
3. The book of Psalms are _____.
4. It is, possibly, best of the _____ as well.
5. What have we discussed about ministry in previous lessons?
6. Asaph actually wrote _____ of the Psalms, himself.
7. Some of the most beautiful messages come in songs like _____.
8. It appears, that Asaph _____ to David privately.
9. What does the name "Jeduthun" mean?
10. He was of the family of _____.
11. In 2 Chronicles 35:15, he is called the king's _____.
12. Heman, of verse 4, is possibly, the one of the _____ Psalm.
13. How many sons and daughters did he have?
14. What instrument did he play?
15. Name some of the instruments that were played.
16. How many, skilled in music and song, were there?
17. What was the purpose of the casting of lots?
18. How many ministered at once?
19. What does the number "12" mean?

20. How many groups of 12 were there?

21. Besides their music and singing, what would they be trained in?