

Day 324 - MONDAY: December 25th

1 Chronicles 25

1 Chronicles 25:1-31 NKJV

Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals. And the number of the skilled men performing their service was: Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah; the sons of Asaph were under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied according to the order of the king. Of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the LORD. Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth. All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to exalt his horn. For God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. All these were under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the authority of the king. So the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight. And they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, the teacher with the student. Now the first lot for Asaph came out for Joseph; the second for Gedaliah, him with his brethren and sons, twelve; the third for Zaccur, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the fourth for Jizri, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the fifth for Nethaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the sixth for

Bukkiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the seventh for Jesharelah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the eighth for Jeshaiiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the ninth for Mattaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the tenth for Shimei, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the eleventh for Azarel, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the twelfth for Hashabiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the thirteenth for Shubael, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the fourteenth for Mattithiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the fifteenth for Jeremoth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the sixteenth for Hananiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the seventeenth for Joshbekashah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the eighteenth for Hanani, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the nineteenth for Mallothi, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the twentieth for Eliathah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the twenty-first for Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the twenty-second for Giddalti, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the twenty-third for Mahazioth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; the twenty-fourth for Romanti-Ezer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “David has a particular interest in the group of Levites assigned to be musicians. He is a musician himself (see 1 Samuel 16:16-23), a maker or perhaps even inventor of musical instruments (1 Chronicles 23:5), and a prolific composer.

Twenty-four sons of the three chief musicians are chosen to head up divisions to correspond with the courses of priests. These three were originally chosen by the tribal leader to be the musicians when the ark was moved to Jerusalem (see 1 Chronicles 15:16-24). The sons of Asaph, of the Levitical sub-tribe of Gershon (Gershon, Kohath and Merari being the three

sons of Levi), had four of the divisions. Asaph had been the chief musician assigned to minister before the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem (see 1 Chronicles 16:4-7, 1 Chronicles 16:37). He, too, composed psalms, with 12 of them bearing his name (Psalms 50, 73-83). The sons of Jeduthun, of the sub-tribe of Merari, had six divisions. Jeduthun is known as Ethan in many scriptures and, along with Heman, served at the tabernacle in Gibeon while the ark was in Jerusalem (see 1 Chronicles 16:39-42). The sons of Heman, of the sub-tribe of Kohath, made up the remaining 14 divisions. Heman was the grandson of the prophet Samuel, and descendant of Korah. One psalm is attributed to Heman (Psalm 88), but 10 others (Psalms 42, 44-49, 84-85, 87) are attributed to the sons of Korah, which would include Heman and his descendants. Additional information can be found in 1 Chronicles 6:31-48.

Note that each group of musicians is said to be "under the direction of their father" (1 Chronicles 25:2-3, 1 Chronicles 25:6). The older King James Version says "under the *hands* of their father," a literal translation of the original Hebrew. This seems to convey the picture of a choral director leading the singers under him. But unlike modern choirs who, since the invention of the printing press and the musical notation of our day, tend to use printed musical notation, it was common for ancient choir directors to use more elaborate hand and arm gestures in a practice known as chironomy. This allowed them to convey not only the timing and volume, but even the notes the group was to sing or play.

When David and Asaph gave the singers and instrumentalists a new song, they probably did not pass out written music for everybody. Certainly the group could learn a new song through

hearing someone sing it several times. But history shows that more sophisticated techniques were employed to enable these professional musicians to know what notes they were to sing or play "instantly" through the hand gestures of their father, or other musical director. That one such director may have been David can be seen in the phrase "order of the king" in verse 2—actually, in the Hebrew, "hands of the king." This at least shows David's direct involvement in composing, but it perhaps also means that he occasionally led the musicians himself.

According to the research and theory of Suzanne Haïk-Vantoura (author of *The Music of the Bible Revealed*, 1991), notation of these hand signals may actually be recorded in the accent marks (the jots and tittles) of the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible.”

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Verse 1 – The Ellicott’s commentary states: “In Hebrew, the verb *to prophesy* is a reflexive form, implying utterance under a spiritual influence. The ancients regarded musical utterance as an effect and proof of direct inspiration, and we still speak of the higher results of genius as inspired, however we may choose to explain the term away as a mere figure of speech. The power of moving sounds, whether of voice or instrument, is not to be gained by mere study or training; it is commonly spoken of as a “gift,” and its products are called “inspirations.” Whence come they, if not from the Divine source of life, and of all that makes life glad and beautiful?” [END]