

**January 21**

**Scriptures:** Read 1 Chronicles 25 & 26

**Key Verse:** “And they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, the teacher with the student.” (1 Chronicles 25:8)

## **Overview**

We read in great detail the organization of the Levitical musicians. David’s interest in music accounts for the importance he put upon it in the worship of the Lord. But, more than that, it was ordained by God. Their arrangement came by divine commands through the prophets Nathan and Gad (cf. 2 Chronicles 29:25). The singers and musicians played an important role during the ritual ceremonies in the Temple. They created an atmosphere of reverence and geared the worshippers’ thoughts to the things of the Lord. It is interesting to note that the word “prophecy” is used of the chief musicians when they played their instruments unto the Lord for the purpose of giving Him thanks and praise (25:1, 3). The book of Psalms provides us with the lyrics to many of these songs. Their beautiful music must have been soothing, and the message of the songs would have reached into the hearts and souls of the people, just as the message of Psalms still does today. The Lord often speaks to people’s hearts through music.

Each of the three Levitical clans were represented by chief musicians: Asaph of Gershon, Heman of Kohath, and Jeduthun of Merari (6:33-47). They were the most skillful musicians and music teachers, yet they were still under David’s authority (25:6). This was not only because David was the king, but because he was also a master musician and the composer of most of the songs (the psalms) they performed, as well as the inventor of many of their musical instruments. From the 4000 Levites designated to be musicians, there were only 288 considered skillful. These were the teachers; yet the students had an equal part in praising God at the Temple (25:8). No one should be excluded from the privilege of expressing his worship to the Lord. The faltering students’ praise was just as acceptable to God as the masters’.

One of the three chief musicians, Heman, was greatly blessed with fourteen sons and three daughters whom God gave him to increase his power and influence (literally rendered as “exalt his horn”, 25:5). Heman also taught music to his daughters, for women were also involved musically in worship to God (cf. Psalm 68:25). It is interesting to note the Hebrew meanings of the last nine names of Heman’s sons (25:4). The meanings of ancient Hebrew names were often significant and expressed a message. Heman may have purposely chosen these names for his sons to express his prayer to God. Beginning with the sixth name, Hananiah, the meanings are: Be gracious to me, O Lord/be gracious to me/You are my God/I magnify you (I lift you up)/help me in my distress/please give to me/I have proclaimed/ highest/visions. Indeed, Heman is called a “seer”, meaning a prophet who sees visions and receives revelations from God (25:5). Possibly, he was inspired by God to write music and may well have written some of the psalms.

David organized all the musicians into twenty-four divisions, and their order of service was decided upon by casting lots, as it was done for the Levites who served at the House of God (24:7, 19). The group of gatekeepers was yet another organization. They also cast lots, not for their period of service but their placement of service. Every gate surrounding the Lord’s House

was guarded so that the holy premises would not be defiled. The Temple treasuries were also guarded by trustworthy Levites; among them were the sons of Moses (26:24-25). The treasuries were the storage rooms in the Temple that held all the things that had been dedicated to the Lord, such as valuables taken as spoil in battle (26:27).

Finally, we read of the organization of Levitical officials and judges that ministered throughout Israel, both west and east of the Jordan (26:30,32). The officials may have been in charge of gathering the tithes and offerings for the House of the Lord, and the judges made rulings according to the laws of Moses. Moses himself had first ordered that those who taught the Law should also be the ones to administer justice according to it (Deuteronomy 17:9; 33:10; 2 Chronicles 19:8, 11). Under Israel's theocracy (the rule of God), there was no separation of church and state, so to speak; therefore, the matters that pertained to the king also pertained to God (26:30, 32). The ideal society is one ruled by the laws of God and inhabited by those who obey them. Because of human imperfection, however, this perfect society will only be realized when Christ rules fully on earth as He does in Heaven.

## **Prayer**

O Lord, we sing our prayer unto You today. (If you know the tune and words of "The Lord's Prayer" or the "Our Father", sing or say it.)