

1 Chronicles

Chapter 25

David Organizes the Musicians

David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals. The list of those who did the work and of their duties was: 2 Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah, sons of Asaph, under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied under the direction of the king. 3 Of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with the lyre in thanksgiving and praise to the LORD. 4 Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. 5 All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer, according to the promise of God to exalt him, for God had given Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. 6 They were all under the direction of their father in the music in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the order of the king. 7 The number of them along with their brothers, who were trained in singing to the LORD, all who were skillful, was 288. 8 And they cast lots for their duties, small and great, teacher and pupil alike. 9 The first lot fell for Asaph to Joseph; the second to Gedaliah, to him and his brothers and his sons, twelve; 10 the third to Zaccur, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 11 the fourth to Izri, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 12 the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 13 the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 14 the seventh to Jesharelah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 15 the eighth to Jeshaiiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 16 the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 17 the tenth to Shimei, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 18 the eleventh to Azarel, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 19 the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 20 to the thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 21 to the fourteenth, Mattithiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 22 to the fifteenth, to Jeremoth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 23 to the sixteenth, to Hananiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 24 to the seventeenth, to Joshbekashah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 25 to the eighteenth, to Hanani, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 26 to the nineteenth, to Mallothi, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 27 to the twentieth, to Eliathah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 28 to the twenty-first, to Hothir, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 29 to the twenty-second, to Giddalti, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 30 to the twenty-third, to Mahazioth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; 31 to the twenty-fourth, to Romamti-ezer, his sons and his brothers, twelve.

Ch 25 David organizes the musicians of the temple from among the Levitical families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. Cf 6:31–48; 15:16–24; 16:4–7, 37–42; 23:5. The use of music in the temple was vital for the praise and prayer of God's people. After supplying the priests with assistants (23:7–32; 24:20–31), David ordered staffs of musicians and singers to be regularly on hand for service in the temple. These were set apart into 24 choruses or ensembles. Each of these was made up of 12 individuals, for a total of 288 persons (vv 1–8). Every unit, constituted by lot, had members from the three musical families. The order in which they were chosen determined also the sequence in which they were to perform their duty in the temple (vv 9–31). Bach: "This chapter is the true foundation of all God-pleasing church music" (*JSBS*, p 93). (TLSB)

25:1 *chiefs of the service.* David often sought the counsel of military leaders (11:10; 12:32; 28:1), even in cultic affairs (13:1; 15:25). (CSB)

David consulted with the commanders of the army before setting apart the musicians. The use of musicians in warfare plays a major role not only in Israel (cf Jgs 7:19–25; 2Ch 20:20–22) but also in the broader ancient Near East. (TLSB)

who prophesied. There are several passages in Chronicles, largely in portions unique to these books, where cultic personnel are designated prophets (here; 2Ch 20:14–17; 29:30; 35:15; cf. 2Ki 23:2; 2Ch 34:30). Zechariah the priest also appears to function as a prophet, though he is not so named (2Ch 24:19–22). This may reflect postexilic interest in the prophet-priest-king figure of Messianic expectation: In Chronicles not only do priests prophesy, but kings also function as priests (see notes on 15:27; 16:1–3). David’s organizing of the temple musicians may reflect his overall interest in music (1Sa 16:23; 18:10; 19:9; 2Sa 1:17–27; 6:5, 14). (CSB)

Singing “thanksgiving and praise to the LORD” with musical accompaniment had much in common with proclamation of the prophetic word (v 3). Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, prophesied (2Ch 24:20); the Levite Jahaziel functioned as a battle prophet (2Ch 20:14–17); and Heman (v 5), Asaph (2Ch 29:30), and Jeduthun (2Ch 35:15) are referred to as seers. In 1Ch, it is David who establishes temple musicians with duties involving prophecy. The institution of prophecy is thus closely connected not only with David but also with the faithful practice of the divinely established worship practices. (TLSB)

25:2 *prophesied under the direction of the king.* David’s concern for music, while certainly connected to his own interests and role as a musician, is reflective of the intimate connection not only between kingship and priesthood but also the prophetic office. The OT offices of prophet, priest, and king shaped the threefold office of David’s Seed, Jesus the Messiah. (TLSB)

25:4 *Hananiah ... Mahazioth.* When rearranged and slightly altered in form, these nine names constitute the words of a short hymn. Hananiah, e.g., means “Lord, have mercy.” The sons of Heman are also in the longer list in vv 9–31. (TLSB)

25:5 *fourteen sons and three daughters.* Numerous progeny are a sign of divine blessing (see Job 1:2; 42:13). This is specifically stated for Heman as the result of the promises of God to exalt him. See 3:1–9; 14:2–7; 26:4–5; 2Ch 11:18–21; 13:21; 21:2; 24:3. (CSB)

seer. Synonym for “prophet.” (TLSB)

25:8 *teacher and pupil.* Implies a formal education or apprenticeship in music. (TLSB)

25:9–31 The Chronicler records the divisions of the Levitical musicians in a manner parallel to the divisions of priests in 24:1–18. (TLSB)

Ch 25 David organizes the musicians of the temple as prophets. The Lord calls church musicians to know and handle His Word rightly for the benefit of the hearers. The Lord speaks through them for our admonition and encouragement. How great a blessing is God’s life-giving Word in melody and chant! • Bless our ears, O Lord, that our eyes may see, that our mouths may say, and that our hands may do what is worthy of Your Gospel. Amen. (TLSB)