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The Musicians for Ministry in the Temple First Chronicles 25: 1-31

The musicians for ministry in the Temple DIG: David is often portrayed as a hero without equal. Whom did David regularly depend on to get God's work accomplished? What three families are set apart by the King? Of these three families, who appears to be "more equal" than the others? What instruments are designated here for special use? How might music serve as prophesy? Why would the music be of interest to army commanders? To David? To the people? Might this place the ministry of the musicians on a par with the Hebrew prophets? Why or why not? What skills in music for YHVH were required in this Temple service? What training was likely given young Hebrews in preparation for such Temple music? Who likely did the teaching? What method of assigning roles and duties did David use? What problems did this avoid? What risks did this entail?

REFLECT: The prophesy of musicians in ancient Isra'el was key to certain military decisions. How does this compare to the relative importance attached to the music program of your school or place of worship? What advantages or disadvantages do you suppose a Minister of Music in David's era would have over today's music ministry? What would your place of worship do with David's 288 trained singers? Are you able to let go with voice and heart in joyful worship? Or do you feel bashful, uncomfortable and out of tune?

David started making the appointments of the musicians for the Temple ministry several years before the end of his life.

Apart from the ritual of blowing the trumpets **(Numbers 10)**, nowhere in the Torah is there any mention of music in connection with Jewish worship; yet **the chronicler** describes an elaborate organization of the four thousand Levites into **twenty-four** divisions of **singers** (see the commentary on and **musicians** that correspond to those of the priests and Temple Levites **(First Chronicles 15:27)**.

David was a writer of psalms and a gifted musician and the music in **the Temple** came as a result of **his** leadership, and **the LORD** approved of those innovations.[530]

David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart three gifted Levites, **Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman, for ministry of prophesying** (which no doubt meant a sort of musical proclamation of divine revelation and expressions of praise and worship put to song)**, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals.** These were Levites: **Here is the list of the men who performed this service (First Chronicles 25:1):**

From the sons of Asaph (who wrote at least twelve psalms and played the cymbals)**: Zakkur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asarelah. The sons of Asaph were under the supervision of Asaph, who prophesied under the king's supervision (First Chronicles 25:2). The sons of Asaph made up four of the twenty-four divisions.**

As for Jeduthun (which is related to the name **Judah** and means **praise**, a good name for a choir director)**, from his sons: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shim'i, Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six in all, under the supervision of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied, using the harp in thanking and praising ADONAI (First Chronicles 25:3). The sons of Jeduthun make up six of the twenty-four divisions.**

As for Heman (also called **the king's seer**, which suggests that **he** had a special gift of discerning **God's** will)**, from his sons: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romamti-Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth. All these were sons of Heman the king's seer. They were given him through the promises of God to exalt Him. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters** and all **his** children were musicians **(First Chronicles 25:4-5). The sons of Heman made up fourteen of the twenty-four divisions.**



All these men were under the supervision of their respective **fathers for the music of the Temple of the LORD, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God. Along with their relatives – all of them trained and skilled in music for YHVH – they numbered 288,** or the total of the twenty-four **divisions** in **verses 9-31.** The twenty-four **divisions** of **the Levites** corresponded to the number of priestly courses in **First Chronicles 24:7-18 (First Chronicles 25:6-7). Young and old alike, teacher as well as student, cast lots** (see the commentary on **Exodus, to see link click Gb – The Urim and Thummim: The Means of Making Decisions**) **for their duties (First Chronicles 25:8).**

As far as the syntax goes, this whole passage is one long sentence, governed by its opening line: **The first lot, which was for Asaph, fell to Joseph, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:9a),**

the second lot fell to Gedaliah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:9b),

the third lot fell to Zakkur, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:10),

the fourth lot fell to Izri (spelled **Zeri** in **verse 3**), **and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:11),**

the fifth lot fell to Nethaniah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:12),

the sixth lot fell to Bukkiah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:13),

the seventh lot fell to Jesarelah (spelled **Asarelah** in **verse 2**)**, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:14),**

the eighth lot fell to Jeshaiah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:15),

the ninth lot fell to Mattaniah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:16),

the tenth lot fell to Shim'i, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:17),

the eleventh lot fell to Azarel (a variant of **Uzziel** in **verse 4**)**, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:18),**

the twelfth lot fell on Hashabiah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:19),

the thirteenth lot fell to Shubael, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:20),

the fourteenth lot fell to Mattithiah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:21),

the fifteenth lot fell to Jerimoth, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:22),

the sixteenth lot fell to Hananiah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:23),

the seventeenth lot fell to Joshbekashah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:24),

the eighteenth lot fell to Hanani, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:25),

the nineteenth lot fell to Mallothi, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:26),

the twentieth lot fell to Eliathah, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First

Chronicles 25:27),

the twenty-first lot fell to Hothir, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:28),

the twenty-second lot fell to Giddalti, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:29),

the twenty-third lot fell to Mahazioth, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:30),

the twenty-fourth lot fell to Romamti-Ezer, and 12 of his sons and relatives (First Chronicles 25:31).