

Three More Groups of Levites are Appointed

1 Chronicles 26

1 Chronicles 26:1-19 - *“Concerning the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. ² And the sons of Meshlemiah were Zechariah the firstborn, Jedaiel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, ³ Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. ⁴ Moreover the sons of Obed-Edom were Shemiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, ⁵ Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him. ⁶ Also to Shemaiah his son were sons born who governed their fathers' houses, because they were men of great ability. ⁷ The sons of Shemaiah were Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad, whose brothers Elihu and Semachiah were able men.*

⁸ All these were of the sons of Obed-Edom, they and their sons and their brethren, able men with strength for the work: sixty-two of Obed-Edom. ⁹ And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, eighteen able men. ¹⁰ Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Shimri the first (for though he was not the firstborn, his father made him the first), ¹¹ Hilkiyah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen.

¹² Among these were the divisions of the gatekeepers, among the chief men, having duties just like their brethren, to serve in the house of the LORD. ¹³ And they cast lots for each gate, the small as well as the great, according to their father's house. ¹⁴ The lot for the East Gate fell to Shelemiah. Then they cast lots for his son Zechariah, a wise counselor, and his lot came out for the North Gate; ¹⁵ to Obed-Edom the South Gate, and to his sons the storehouse. ¹⁶ To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came out for the West Gate, with the Shallecheth Gate on the ascending highway - watchman opposite watchman. ¹⁷ On the east were six Levites, on the north four each day, on the south four each day, and for the storehouse two by two. ¹⁸ As for the Parbar on the west, there were four on the highway and two at the Parbar. ¹⁹ These were the divisions of the gatekeepers among the sons of Korah and among the sons of Merari.”

Background Notes

In 1 Chronicles 22 David began to make preparations for the Temple of the Lord that his son Solomon would build in Jerusalem. David gathered together men, material, and money for the great work of building the Temple. In chapter 23 David numbered the Levites who would serve, with various responsibilities and duties. In chapter 24 the priests and other Levites were divided into twenty-four groups that would rotate during the year for active service at the Temple. In chapter 25, David divided the singers and musicians among the Levites into twenty-four groups to conduct and direct the praise and thanksgiving at the Temple.

Now in chapter 26, three more groups of Levites were appointed for special duties in connection with all the Levitical activities, for service at the Temple and throughout the land of Israel. The gatekeepers, or guards, of the Temple were chosen in verses 1-26. The guards of the Temple treasures were appointed in verses 27-28. The Levites who would

oversee the legal affairs throughout the land of Israel were assigned to their respective areas in verses 27-32. Keep in mind that all these arrangements were made even before the Temple was built.

And chapter 28 tells us that **God specifically directed David** in all these detailed preparations and plans. 1 Chronicles 28:19: *“All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the details of these plans.”*

Here we have a prophetic shadow of the detailed plans and preparations God is making for the future Temple and millennial kingdom of our Lord on the earth. There will be a literal Temple in Christ’s millennial kingdom. (Read the detailed plans in Ezekiel 40-48,) All believers will have special responsibilities in that kingdom. *“We will reign with Christ for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6)*. So if you’re a believer, detailed plans are being made for your responsibilities in that kingdom, even as you faithfully serve the Lord now in this life.

Our Doctrinal Points cover three more areas of service for the Levites, and application for Christian service today.

Doctrinal Points

1. Guarding the Lord’s house is important service.

Verses 1-19 are the record of the Levites who were appointed to guard the gates of the Temple complex. In chapter 23, four thousand Levites were appointed as gatekeepers (23:5). Here is a list of the leaders and the gates they guarded, that were chosen by the drawing of lots.

The house of Obed-Edom is mentioned (v4-8). Remember - Obed-Edom and his family took care of the Ark after it fell off the cart, and Uzzah was killed for touching it (chapter 13). Until David brought the Ark up to Jerusalem, it remained with Obed-Edom. *“The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months, and the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had.”*

The household of Obed-Edom was further blessed when his sons and grandsons were chosen as gatekeepers for the house of the Lord. The Lord blessed them with the privilege of guarding the gates to the south (v15). The king would enter the Temple area by a southern gate since his palace was south of the Temple. By the way, archaeologists have recently uncovered the foundations of David’s palace, directly south of the Temple Mount, in the “City of David” area in Jerusalem.

“As for the Parbar on the west, there were four on the highway and two at the Parbar.” Most likely the Parbar was a building on the west side of the Temple Mount that was associated with the Temple gates. The details of these verses show that many Levites were required to guard the many gates and entrance structures of the Temple complex.

It was very important that unauthorized persons would be prevented from entering and profaning the Temple area. Gatekeepers were on duty, guarding the Temple gates day and night (9:27).

There's a spiritual lesson here. We have a responsibility today as gatekeepers in the house of the Lord. Churches today must guard against false teachers and false teaching. Guarding the Lord's house is important service.

2. Guarding the Lord's treasure is important service.

1 Chronicles 26:20-28 - *"Of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasuries of the house of God and over the treasuries of the dedicated things. ²¹ The sons of Laadan, the descendants of the Gershonites of Laadan, heads of their fathers' houses, of Laadan the Gershonite: Jehieli. ²² The sons of Jehieli, Zetham and Joel his brother, were over the treasuries of the house of the LORD. ²³ Of the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites: ²⁴ Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was overseer of the treasuries. ²⁵ And his brethren by Eliezer were Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiiah his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son.*

²⁶ This Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasuries of the dedicated things which King David and the heads of fathers' houses, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the army, had dedicated. ²⁷ Some of the spoils won in battles they dedicated to maintain the house of the LORD. ²⁸ And all that Samuel the seer, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruah had dedicated, every dedicated thing, was under the hand of Shelomith and his brethren."

These special guards of the Temple treasures probably came from among the 4,000 Levites who were designated as gatekeepers (chapter 23). Where did all these Temple treasures come from? They came from the required tithes and offerings of the people, and also special gifts. Dedicated gifts came from King David, Samuel, Abner, Joab, elders and leaders - and even from King Saul (v26-28). Some of the treasures were spoils of war that were dedicated to the Lord by military commanders. For obvious reasons, special guards were needed to protect all this treasure.

The lesson for today is clear. Special guard and care must be taken protect the Lord's treasure today. Throughout Church history, misuse of the Lord's funds and lack of fiscal responsibility has led to all kinds of problems in the Church. Guarding the Lord's treasure is important service.

3. Guarding the Lord's Law is important service.

1 Chronicles 26:29-32 - *"Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons performed duties as officials and judges over Israel outside Jerusalem. ³⁰ Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, one thousand seven hundred able men, had the oversight of Israel on the west side of the Jordan for all the business of the LORD, and in the service of the king. ³¹ Among the Hebronites, Jerijah was head of the Hebronites according to his genealogy of the fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought, and there were found among them capable men at Jazer of Gilead.³² And his*

brethren were two thousand seven hundred able men, heads of fathers' houses, whom King David made officials over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God and the affairs of the king."

Back in 1 Chronicles 23:4, we read that 6,000 of the chosen Levites were officers and judges throughout the land. 1700 of these capable men were assigned on the west side of the Jordan River, and 2700 were assigned to the territories of the two and a half tribes on the east side of the Jordan (v29-32). All were capable administrators.

Remember, Israel was a theocracy – directly ruled by God. So the law of the land was the Mosaic Law, that was given directly by the mouth of God. The Levites were the official interpreters of God's Word, and thus they were the lawyers and judges in that day. So 6,000 Levites were scattered throughout the land to administer justice and the affairs of God and the king in the 48 Levitical cities (v32). Thus they were guarding the Lord's Law.

We too are responsible to guard the Lord's Law - the Word of God - from misinterpretation and misapplication. *"Study to present yourself to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed" (1 Timothy 2:15).* Just like those capable Levites in David's time, God wants us to be capable "Levites." *"Guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood - over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders (Acts 20:28).* Guarding the Lord's Law is very important service.

Practical Application

Thank the Lord for the blessing of children!

In what way did God greatly bless the house of Obed-Edom (v5)? Lots of money? Not according to the text. Big house? No. Fame? No. Political position? No. Popularity? No. Obed-Edom was greatly blessed with **children!**

Verses 4-5 say that Obed-Edom had eight sons, *"for God had blessed him" (v5)!* I know there may be times when you don't think of your kids as a great blessing from the Lord - but they are! Psalm 127:3 says, *"Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a reward from Him."* Thank the Lord for the blessing of children!