

December 8 Lesson 2 (NIV)

DAVID'S GRATITUDE

DEVOTIONAL READING: Deuteronomy 26:1–11
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 1 Chronicles 16:7–36

1 CHRONICLES 16:8–12, 28–36

- ⁸ Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.**
- ⁹ Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.**
- ¹⁰ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.**
- ¹¹ Look to the LORD and his strength;
seek his face always.**
- ¹² Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,**
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- ²⁸ Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.**
- ²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come before him.
Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.**
- ³⁰ Tremble before him, all the earth!
The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.**
- ³¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"**
- ³² Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!**
- ³³ Let the trees of the forest sing,
let them sing for joy before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.**
- ³⁴ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.**
- ³⁵ Cry out, "Save us, God our Savior;
gather us and deliver us from the nations
that we may give thanks to your holy name,
and glory in your praise."**
- ³⁶ Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,**

from everlasting to everlasting.

Then all the people said “Amen” and “Praise the LORD.”

KEY VERSE

Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.—1 Chronicles 16:8

HONORING GOD

Unit 1: David Honors God

LESSONS 1–5

LESSON OUTLINE

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 - B. Seek the Lord (vv. 10b, 11)
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 - C. Remember His Works (v. 12)
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 - All Nature Sings*
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Conclusion

- A. Eyes of Gratitude
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

HOW TO SAY IT

AsaphAy-saff.

BenaiahBe-nay-juh.

JahazielJuh-hay-zuh-el.

LevitesLee-vites.

Uzza(h)Uz-zuh.

Introduction

A. “The King of ...”

Even though we may not live under a monarchy, the word *king* is still an important part of our vocabulary. We often use it to signify that someone or something is the best in its category. In baseball the pitcher who leads the major league in strikeouts is termed the Strikeout King, and the leader in home runs is called the Home Run King. NASCAR driver Richard Petty became known as simply the King because of his accomplishments in the sport.

In music, Elvis Presley is generally given the title of King of Rock and Roll, while Michael Jackson receives the accolade of King of Pop. Fans of the genre would likely disagree over who the King of Country is, depending on their preference for older or more contemporary versions.

If one were to create a title such as “King of Psalms,” there is no question who would be the recipient of that honor; it would have to be given to King David. It is he who became known as the “sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1, King James Version). If David were to be offered such an honor, he most likely would refuse to accept it because his music was devoted to the praises of a far greater king: the Lord God of Israel. Whatever talent David possessed, he recognized it as being a gift from that same God.

B. Lesson Context

Today’s lesson text closely follows the passage covered last week. There David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem amidst great celebration and joy (see 1 Chronicles 15; lesson 1). After the ark was placed inside the tent that David had provided for it, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings were sacrificed (16:1). These expressions of worship were needed following the first attempt to transport the ark (see chapter 13). Likely they were partly given in repentance for the previous flippant attitude toward transporting the ark; partly they were offered undoubtedly to thank God for restoring and repairing their relationship with him.

A burnt offering was completely consumed on the altar, signifying the worshipper’s complete devotion to the Lord. Fellowship offerings were given with a desire to establish fellowship or communion between the worshipper and the Lord. They included a shared meal among the worshippers. On this occasion, David blessed the worshippers, then provided each one with food for their meal (1 Chronicles 16:2, 3).

David then appointed some of the Levites “to minister before the ark of the Lord” (1 Chronicles 16:4). That ministry was to focus primarily on leading the people in worship, specifically in the area of music. David desired to show utmost reverence toward the sacred space associated with the ark of the covenant. He assigned specific individuals to play certain instruments and even appointed two priests, Benaiah and Jahaziel, to sound trumpets regularly before the ark (16:4–6).

Chief among the men appointed by David for these sacred tasks was Asaph, who had already assisted in bringing the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:17). Asaph’s authorship of certain psalms was noted in last week’s study (see lesson 1 commentary on 1 Chronicles 15:16). David commissioned a special psalm of thanksgiving for Asaph for use on this important day and then for use in any future occasions of celebration and praise (16:7). David did not want Asaph to sing

a solo or lead a professional chorus. Instead, this appears to have been an opportunity to teach the people a new worship song.

The resulting psalm contains sections that are similar to three psalms found in the book of Psalms (compare 1 Chronicles 16:8–22 to Psalm 105:1–15; 1 Chronicles 16:23–33 to Psalm 96; and 1 Chronicles 16:34–36 to Psalm 106:1, 47, 48). None of these three psalms are credited to David, nor is the psalm in 1 Chronicles 16 specifically attributed to him. He could have commissioned another writer to provide a psalm for Asaph (1 Chronicles 16:7). David, whose heavy involvement in this ceremony has already been noted, also could easily have composed a psalm for this occasion. The new song called attention to the Lord's goodness to his people throughout their history. It also challenged his people to give God the glory due his great name.

I. Call to Worship **(1 CHRONICLES 16:8–12)**

A. Praise the Lord (vv. 8–10a)

8. Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

Not only does David desire that all of God's people engage in giving *praise to the Lord*, he also intends for *the nations* to hear about what the Lord *has done* (see 1 Chronicles 16:19–27).

9. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.

The exhortation continues with the command to *sing praise* to the Lord. As in the previous verse, the worship of the Lord is not always meant to be private. The worshipper is to *tell* of the Lord's *wonderful acts*.

The world could use more talk about the Lord. Such conversations include telling *all* of what God has done in creation and the history of his people. We should also share personal testimonies about his work in our lives as David models elsewhere (Psalms 19; 30; 34; 63; 142, etc.). Christians have a greater story to share than David knew: we tell of Jesus' mighty work for all the nations (Matthew 28:18–20; Ephesians 2:11–22; Hebrews 11:32–40; Revelation 15:3, 4; etc.).

10a. Glory in his holy name;

The Hebrew word *hallelujah* is translated here as *glory*. The *holy name* of the Lord is ample reason to glorify him. In a biblical context, one's name is associated with the person's character or reputation (Exodus 20:7; Proverbs 22:1). The name of the Lord is truly above all names, for his character and reputation are far superior to any possible rival (Exodus 3:14, 15; Psalms 8:1, 9; 20:1, 5, 7; etc.; compare Philippians 2:9–11).

B. Seek the Lord (vv. 10b, 11)

10b. let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

Today, the heart is connected primarily to romantic affections. Throughout the Old Testament, the word *heart* often indicates the inner person that is home to one's deepest desires (Genesis 6:5; Exodus 4:21; 35:21; etc.). For one's heart to *rejoice* shows that the heart is pursuing or has found what it most wants.

The discipline of seeking the Lord is found throughout the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 4:29; 1 Chronicles 22:19; 2 Chronicles 14:2–4; Isaiah 55:6; Jeremiah 29:13). The Psalms regularly

admonish worshippers to *seek the Lord* (Psalms 9:10; 24:6; 27:8; etc.). The people do not seek someone who intends to stay hidden. God has revealed himself in many ways throughout history (Hebrews 1:1, 2). This seeking is an unending though fruitful quest on earth (1 Corinthians 13:9–12). Our search will be completed when we are with the Lord for eternity (Revelation 21:3).

11. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

The Israelites may be tempted to *look* for strength by the worship of foreign gods (Exodus 32:1; Numbers 25:1–3; 1 Kings 18:18–40) or by forming treaties with other nations (Exodus 34:12, 15; Joshua 9:3–15; 2 Chronicles 35:20–24). Instead of trusting God, the Israelites may be tempted to put their trust in a mighty military (Judges 7:1–8; 1 Samuel 8:10–12; 1 Kings 22:1–39) or by using oppressive economic practices to make them secure in wealth (Isaiah 10:1, 2; Amos 2:6, 7; 8:4–6). Instead of relying on these worldly sources of power, David exhorts the people to seek God’s *strength* (compare 1 Samuel 2:10; Isaiah 45:24).

To *seek the Lord’s face always* suggests that a person should strive to know him well. Moses is described as someone “whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deuteronomy 34:10). Yet, not even Moses was permitted to see the face of the Lord in the sense of viewing his glory directly (Exodus 33:18–20). Jesus later tells his disciples that seeing him is seeing God (John 12:44; 14:7, 9; compare Colossians 1:15–20). The climax of seeking the Lord’s face will be seeing him face-to-face in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:4).

C. Remember His Works (v. 12)

12. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.

The exhortation to *remember* the Lord is common in the Old Testament (examples: Deuteronomy 8:2, 18; Ecclesiastes 12:1). His people tend to forget him without constant reminders (Deuteronomy 32:7–9, 18; Judges 3:7; 1 Samuel 12:9–15; compare 1 Corinthians 11:20–29). If we remember *the wonders he has done* and *his miracles*, we will be less apt to act unfaithfully.

The judgments of the Lord refer to more than judicial decisions and can be translated “justice” (Deuteronomy 16:19; 2 Samuel 15:6; etc.). The Hebrew word can refer to the principles and commandments he has given his covenant people to live by (Exodus 21:1; Deuteronomy 4:14; etc.). For the people to have received such judgments from the Lord is just as much a sacred privilege as having witnessed his wonders (Psalm 147:20).

First Chronicles 16:13–27 (not included in today’s text) highlights the Lord’s works on behalf of his covenant people—works they should remember. Also included are exhortations to sing to the Lord and to speak of his great works to other peoples (1 Chronicles 16:23, 24).

II. Call Extended

(1 CHRONICLES 16:28–33)

A. To the Nations (vv. 28, 29)

28. Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

God has always had a plan to provide salvation for the *families of nations*. Within the Old Testament, in which the nation of Israel is God’s “treasured possession” (Exodus 19:5), there are hints of his intention to bless all the nations in the entire world (Genesis 3:15; 22:18; Isaiah 2:2; 11:9; Micah 4:1; etc.). Jesus fulfills that plan (2 Corinthians 5:17–19; Colossians 1:21–23). It will

come to full fruition in Heaven, where the righteous “from every nation, tribe, people and language” will find their home (Revelation 7:9).

29. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

True worship is expressed in more than words. It must include action, specifically *an offering* (Leviticus 7:29; 9:7; 22:29; contrast Psalm 51:17; Micah 6:6–8). Such an offering could be an animal, raw grains or other produce, fruits and grains already prepared as food and drink, or other valuable goods (Exodus 25:21–29; Leviticus 2; 22:21; 23:13, 18, 37; etc.). The most important feature of an offering is the excellence of the gift—so good as to be perfect (example: Leviticus 3:6).

One should keep in mind the historical backdrop of this psalm: proper transportation of the ark of the covenant following an improper attempt (1 Chronicles 13; 15)—an attempt that was unholy in manner. The quality of *holiness* is central to God’s character (Joshua 24:19; 1 Samuel 2:2; etc.). To worship in *the splendor of his holiness* means not only being aware of God’s holiness but also approaching him as his holy people (1 Peter 1:15, 16). This can happen only as we obey him. God desires that his covenant people live holy lives. Christians must understand that this is the primary reason God has given us his Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 4:7, 8; compare Hebrews 12:14).

B. To All Nature (vv. 30–33)

30. Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.

The command to *tremble* reflects a concern that proper reverence be shown to the Lord, particularly in light of what happened during the first attempt to carry the ark (see 1 Chronicles 13). The phrase *all the earth* is emphasized by appearing three times within this psalm (see 16:14, 23). The Lord’s control over the entire *world* stabilizes and sustains it. Nothing throws it out of its orbit; the planet remains in the place assigned by its Creator. When God desires to remove it from its place in order to establish the new heaven and earth, that will indeed happen (2 Peter 3:10–13).

31. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, “The LORD reigns!”

The entire *heavens* and *the earth*, which the Lord has created (Genesis 1:1), are now called on to *rejoice* in their Maker. People—who are not only created by God but made in his image (1:27)—should witness *among the nations*, in the chorus with all creation, that *the Lord reigns!* None other is worthy of this declaration.

32a. Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;

The members of this choir continue to grow in number as the waters and the land and all their inhabitants add their voices. *The sea*, far from being a tranquil retreat, often represents chaos (Psalm 46:2, 3; Proverbs 8:29; Habakkuk 1:14). Its worship of the Lord reveals that even the seemingly untamable depths, with all its creatures, falls under God’s power and yearns to see his greatness (Job 41; Psalm 74:13; Jonah 1:17; 2:10).

32b. let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!

The fields represent a contrast to the sea. Far from being chaotic, they can be depended on to provide for the people as long as God blesses the fields to yield their bounty. Their rejoicing looks like bountiful food for people and their animals, a riot of thriving vegetation.

33. Let the trees of the forest sing, let them sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

Elsewhere *trees* “clap their hands” in praise to the Lord (Isaiah 55:12). This image helps round out the growing picture of all creation worshipping the Lord. It does so because the Lord’s judging will include the release of all creation from the curse of sin. Paul pictures the creation as groaning even now for that deliverance from the “bondage to decay” (Romans 8:19–23) that will one day take place.

III. Call Concluded **(1 CHRONICLES 16:34–36)**

A. Repeated Praise (v. 34)

34. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

The final two phrases of this verse are repeated with slight variations several times within the Old Testament, often accompanied by a command to *give thanks* (2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Psalms 107:1; 136; Jeremiah 33:11). Such repetition suggests the refrain’s importance. No one can overstate the fact that *the Lord ... is good*.

Being repeatedly reminded of God’s goodness and *love* prompts his people to thank him for all that he does. That thankfulness in turn should direct the people to walk in the Lord’s ways (Romans 2:4).

B. Request for Deliverance (v. 35)

35. Cry out, “Save us, God our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise.”

Thus far this psalm has featured a series of exhortations to *praise*, *give thanks to*, and worship the Lord. For the first time, words of request appear. The people’s praying to be delivered *from the nations* reveals that salvation in this context concerns physical well-being, not primarily spiritual realities.

The nations are called to know that the Lord is king (1 Chronicles 16:31), but the song recognizes that they often pose a threat to God’s covenant people. The plea for deliverance springs not from selfish or vengeful motives but from a desire that the Lord’s *name* (his character and reputation) be exalted (Psalm 115). When *God* acts on behalf of his people, he gives them fresh material for which to *give thanks*.

C. Response of Praise (v. 36)

36a. Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said “Amen” and “Praise the Lord.”

The psalm concludes with a final tribute of praise that foreshadows the very picture of Heaven (Revelation 7:11, 12; 21:22–27). God by his nature is to be praised, and the saved will spend eternity praising him.

One can only imagine the rousing response of *Amen* that climaxes this unforgettable day. *The people* react as the songwriter and leaders intend.

Conclusion

A. Eyes of Gratitude

I'll never forget the first time I put glasses on, back in the seventh grade. My teacher had noticed my squinting to see the blackboard. I went through the tests with an eye doctor and didn't think too much about it. Then came the day when I first put on my glasses. Just before doing so, the lady said to me, "Look across the street." I did. Then she had me put on the glasses, and she said again, "Look across the street." I couldn't believe how clear everything was; it was amazing! I had no idea how poor my vision was until I could see clearly.

We are accustomed to praying with our eyes closed. That way, we can shut out distractions and approach prayer with the right frame of mind. But it doesn't hurt to pray with our eyes open—to see the many reasons around us for which to be thankful. This is something we can do as we drive (we don't want to close our eyes then, anyway!) or when we walk through the neighborhood or look out the window—or across the street. Such a practice can enhance our spiritual vision and deepen our sense of God's presence in everyday life.

B. Prayer

Father, we thank you for the mercy you demonstrated to all of humanity in the sending of Jesus, our Creator and Savior. May our worship of him be offered each day in word and deed from grateful hearts. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

Make each and every day a day of thanksgiving.¹