

Thanksgiving

A HEART FILLED WITH THANKSGIVING

Focal Verses • 1 CHRONICLES 16:8–12, 28–36

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson we will: **ANALYZE** the psalm David sang when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem; **REJOICE** in the wonderful things God has done on behalf of His people; and **EXPRESS** thanks for God's greatness and provision.

In Focus

A few weeks ago, the family heirloom, an old wooden clock, arrived at Breana's house. She was excited to see the clock Grandma Lottie had talked about for years. The clock belonged to her great-grandmother's grandfather. Grandma Lottie had told stories to each new generation about the significance of the clock and the fun times family members had regarding the heirloom.

The wood that framed the clock was from a family tree planted on land the family owned in North Carolina. Later, the land was seized and stolen from the family. Therefore, the family heirloom passed down from one generation to another, serving as a reminder of their past and an inspiration for their future.

Through the years, various family members kept the clock in their homes. Unfortunately, a fire in Breana's uncle and aunt's house damaged the clock. Although the clock was rescued and repaired, no one knew its whereabouts. Breana's cousin, Darlique, recently contacted family members to say the clock was in their uncle Harold's attic. He had forgotten about the clock until he went to the attic to look for a model train his grandchildren wanted to see. Uncle Harold mailed the clock to Breana's house, and everyone praised God for the clock's return.

How does your family praise and thank God? Why do you praise and thank God?



Keep in Mind

"Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people" (1 Chronicles 16:8, KJV).

Focal Verses

KJV 1 Chronicles 16:8 Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

9 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.

10 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

11 Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.

12 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

28 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

29 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

30 Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.

31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth.

32 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.

33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth.

34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

35 And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.

36 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

The People, Places, and Times

Psalm. Any sort of religious song can be considered a “psalm,” whether it offers a cry for help, a shout of thanks, or simply adoration. The words of many Jewish religious songs have been preserved in the Scriptures. The book of Psalms is a well-known source for these songs, but some of the psalms are also repeated in other parts of the Scriptures. In today’s lesson, we have a psalm that parallels several psalms found in the book of Psalms.

David. As king of Israel, David was responsible for unifying the nation, building Jerusalem as its capital, and bringing the Ark of the Covenant to a proper place of worship. King David composed many songs, some of which are recorded in the Scripture.

Background

Readers should be aware of two backgrounds when interacting with this text. First there is the

background of David’s story, and second, there is the background of the writing of Chronicles. David ruled in Israel around 1000 BC. The date of Chronicles’ writing is between 400 and 350 BC. There is no specific scriptural reference to the author, but according to Jewish tradition, the writer of Chronicles was Ezra.

The original audience of Chronicles was the Jewish people who returned from exile. The book was written to provide perspective and historical continuity as they returned to Israel from Babylon. They had to rebuild the Temple, restore worship, including the Levitical sacrificial system, and rebuild the cities. Many negative events of David’s reign are left out of Chronicles. This was not because the author wanted to erase those events from history books; rather, the book of Chronicles focuses on relaying the key elements of Jewishness that were considered foundational in rebuilding the nation.

Chronicles' post-exilic audience saw newfound meaning in David's previous establishment of a center for national worship. Generations ago, when David brought the Ark into Jerusalem, he sent the message that every Israelite should worship Yahweh, and Yahweh alone. He also sent the message that Jerusalem would be the center of this worship, the one special place on earth where God chose to dwell, as represented by the Ark. David called the Israelites to joyously remember all God had done to bring them to this point.

At-A-Glance

1. A Call to Thanksgiving
(1 Chronicles 16:8–12)
2. Nature called to Praise God
(vv. 28–33)
3. Petition for Israel's Deliverance
(vv. 34–36)

In Depth

1. A Call to Thanksgiving (1 Chronicles 16:8–12)

This first part of this psalm of thanksgiving (vv. 8–22) parallels Psalm 105:1–15. David invites all those who accompanied him to Jerusalem for the installation of the Ark to give thanks unto the Lord (v. 8) for all His wondrous works (v. 9), His holy name (v. 10), and for the judgments of His mouth (v. 12). These verses demonstrate what should comprise a song of worship to God: adoration not just for what God has done, but also for who He is.

In writing Chronicles, Ezra recounted this psalm to encourage the Jews to engage Yahweh in worshipful praise. The Jews who just returned from exile are to thank God for keeping His everlasting covenant with their forefathers, fulfilling His promise of settlement into the land

of promise (Psalm 105:8–11), and bringing them back to the land of promise after years in exile.

There is also a place for shouting aloud to God in praise. The call requested here is not that of lament or deliverance, but of a loud shout to God in praise. In recounting this time that David leads the Israelites to praise God for establishing them in Jerusalem, Ezra hoped to lead the Jews to praise God for bringing them back from exile.

Verse 8 says, "Make known his deeds among the people." These words challenge the Israelites to share what the Lord has done for them among the people of other faiths, tribes, languages, and countries. The Israelites of David's time had many groups living close by in Canaan to show God's deeds to the Philistines, Moabites, Amorites, and so forth. The Israelites of Ezra's time had broadened their worlds through the exile and would think to spread the news of God's deeds to Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece. Verse 9 commands the listeners to sing. David assigned the Levites the duty of singing praise to God, but today we are all called to sing unto the Lord as an expression of our gratitude to him.

The reference to God's "strength" (v. 11) likely refers to the Ark of the Covenant, which they were moving. The Ark was seen as a symbol of the strength of God. Ezra, therefore, encouraged his audience to depend on the Lord, both in good times and bad. Verse 12 declares that Israel should "Remember his marvellous works." This is a reference to the Exodus from Egypt (Psalm 105:5, 26–27). The phrase "judgments of his mouth" (v. 12) refers to God's verdict against those who offend Him.

What did the Israelites thank God for? Is your thanksgiving to God different?

2. Nature Called to Praise God (vv. 28–33)

We also read 1 Chronicles 16:24–33 in Psalm 96:3–13. The first invitation to thanksgiving is specifically to the Israelites, while the second

call is general. In these verses, families of nations and all nature are invited to praise God. The audience is called to bring various gifts to the Lord, like glory, strength, and offerings.

Nature is also invited to praise God. Both the tumultuous sea and orderly fields shout their praises to Yahweh. These verses call us to consider the injustices humans inflict on God's creation via polluting the sea or chopping down forests. When we abuse the natural habitat and animals around us, we deprive God of the worship His creation brings Him. Taking care of natural resources is another way to show our gratitude to God.

How should your praise of God include enabling nature to show His glory?

3. Petition for Israel's Deliverance (vv. 34–36)

These last three verses parallel Psalm 106:1, 47, and 48. It is a transition from praise to petition. These verses depict what comprises a proper attitude for the worshiper: gratitude for what God has done, followed with a humble prayer for God's constant help and deliverance.

The prayer for God to "gather" (v. 35) them and hold the people together reflects the fears of a people surrounded by enemies. While the Israelites of David's time felt pressure from the neighboring Philistines and Moabites, the Israelites of Ezra's time were likely thinking of the threat of the Egyptians and Persians. The Israelites finally learned their lesson and cried out for deliverance from the Lord, not from their leaders or prophets. Verse 36 encourages the people to say Amen. It was a common practice and the usual way to respond in the public worship to the priests' and Levites' prayer (Deuteronomy 27:15–26; Nehemiah 8:6). "All the people" here refers to those who accompanied David to Jerusalem in bringing the Ark.

What do you do in your time of crisis? Whom do you call, and how can they help you?

Search the Scriptures

1. What blessings should the nation thank God for in these verses (1 Chronicles 16:8–12)?
2. How was Israel to tell other people of God's greatness (v. 28)?
3. What elements in nature praise God (vv. 30–33)? How?

Discuss the Meaning

1. Discuss the injunction to give thanks to the Lord. What effect did this have on the attitudes of the returnees? How does it impact us?
2. What do you think the statements about nature and the earth meant to the Hebrew people?

Liberating Lesson

We are in a society where people want things done in a jiffy, and this attitude has penetrated into our worship service. People rush in and out of God's presence without spending time to appreciate Him for specific things He has done for them. Some who wish to thank Him are often at a loss on what to thank Him for. David and the chronicler offer us specific things to thank the Lord for: all His wondrous works, His holy name, and the judgments of His mouth. We can thank Him for the daily victories He gives us, the gift of eternal life, and the gift of His Word that teaches, rebukes, and corrects us, as well as the Holy Spirit who reminds us of all things and convicts us. We are called to be grateful for all these things. Often pains and challenges of life blind us from observing these immeasurable blessings.

Expression of our gratitude to God should be seen in our relationship with nature. It is our responsibility to care for the natural resources around us in order to enhance their worship of God. When we pollute and waste the environment by chopping trees, pollute the atmosphere and pour waste into the sea, it destroys them, thereby depriving God the praise they bring Him.

Application for Activation

Having seen the various ways the Israelites were encouraged to praise God, we are also called to express our gratitude to God. First, remember God's miracles in your life and write them in a journal or notebook as a record of His grace. Then tell three people, especially those of other faiths and unbelievers, about God's blessings. Second, as you consider the practical steps you could take to preserve nature around you, spend about 30 minutes each day tending to God's creation. Third, turn your eyes from hope in people and instead cry unto the Lord concerning situations you are going through. Take time to petition the Lord for those issues that are on your heart and for His grace upon others, making sure that you praise Him in anticipation of His answers.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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Say It Correctly

Kiriath-Jearim.
 KEE-ree-ath JEH-ah-reem.
 Abinadab. ah-BEN-an-DAB.

Daily Bible Readings

DAY 64

Deuteronomy 28–29
 Psalm 31:1–8

DAY 65

Deuteronomy 30–31
 Psalm 31:9–15

DAY 66

Deuteronomy 32–34
 Psalm 31:16–24

DAY 67

Joshua 1–4
 Psalm 32:1–5

DAY 68

Joshua 5–8
 Psalm 32:6–11

DAY 69

Joshua 9–11
 Psalm 33:1–5

DAY 70

Joshua 12–15
 Psalm 33:6–11