

The Godly Father, Heman

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Bible Text: 1 Chronicles 25:4-6; Psalm 88

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Turn with me in the holy Scriptures tonight to Psalm 88. We're going to read together Psalm 88. My text tonight is taken from 1 Chronicles 25:4-6 but first we're going to read Psalm 88. I call your attention to the heading of this Psalm, "A Song, or Psalm, of the sons of Korah," or for the sons of Korah, "to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth," and then especially this last notice, "Maschil," that term "Maschil" refers to a type of Psalm, a teaching Psalm, a doctrinal Psalm. You'll find that in many of the headings of the Psalms. A particular truth is being emphasized in the Psalm. "Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite."

1 O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: 2 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; 3 For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. 4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: 5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. 6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. 7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.

Selah is a musical notation but it does mean a kind of rest for contemplation on what has just been said.

8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. 9 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. 10 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. 11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? 12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? 13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. 14 LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? 15 I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. 16 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. 17 They came round

about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. 18 Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

There ends our reading of the word of God tonight. May the Lord add his blessing to our reading of the holy Scripture.

The text to which I call your attention is found in 1 Chronicles 25, it's verses 4 through 6, but I want to read with you the first seven verses of 1 Chronicles 25.

1 Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was: 2 Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied according to the order of the king. 3 Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun,

Except that if you count, there are only five, so where is the sixth? The sixth is mentioned in verse 17, Shimei, and very likely he is a grandson of Jeduthun. Not a son and therefore not included with the five who are mentioned here, but added later on in the chapter. He is the sixth.

under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD.

And now verse 4 through verse 6, the text for tonight,

4 Of Heman: the sons of Heman; Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamtiezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahaziah: 5 All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. 6 All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. 7 So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD [those would be the Psalms], even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.

And there ends the text and its context for tonight.

1 Chronicles 25 continues the record of the preparations made by King David for the building of the house of God, the temple. As you recall, you children recall from Catechism and from school, God had forbidden King David actually to build the house of God, the temple. That had been David's desire. He had said, "See now, I dwell in an

house of cedar but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains," 2 Samuel 7:2. And so it was his desire to build the house of God, a habitation for the ark of God's covenant and the center of the worship of God in Jerusalem, but through Nathan the prophet, God had informed David that it was not his will that David should build his house and he gave David two reasons for that. First of all, David had been a man of war, and secondly and closely connected to that, he had shed much blood, and therefore God did not want David to be the builder of his house, instead it would be David's son, Solomon, who would build the house of God.

Although that was greatly disappointing to David, David submitted himself to the will of God. He did, and at the same time, he did everything that he could to make preparations for the building of the house of God. Those preparations included gathering materials that would be used by Solomon eventually for the construction of the temple. Read especially 1 Chronicles 22 and 1 Chronicles 28 in this connection. He appointed masons to hew stones that would be used for the construction of the temple, 1 Chronicles 22:2. He prepared in abundance for all the work and for the basic construction of the temple. Iron, iron that would be used for nails, for hinges, for doors, for gates, and for many other particulars in the building of the temple. Besides he gathered brass, brass in such abundance that it was without weight. And he also gave out of his own wealth silver and gold. Silver and gold in such abundance that it was without measure, according to 1 Chronicles 21:14 and following. That gold and silver would be used for the construction of all the vessels, all the instruments of service, all the furnishings and furniture of the temple. And then so much more besides.

But David's preparations for the temple were not limited to physical and material preparations. He did more besides. It belonged to the preparations that David made that he was concerned for a smooth transition from the worship of God in the tabernacle to the worship of God in the temple. For that smooth transition, David numbered the sons of Aaron, the priests, and he divided them into 24 courses which in turn would minister in the house of God, having charge of the worship services, the public worship services in the temple by rotation by turn. Along with that, he numbered the Levites, the Levites who would assist the priests in all the work of the temple. He divided them too into 24 courses which by turn would serve in the house of God.

One additional preparation that David made for the house of God that was to come and be built by Solomon was his designation of certain families of the Levites who would have charge of the worship of God by music. They would have charge especially of the ministry of music in the house of God, the temple. Those three families designated by David were in turn descendants of Levi's three sons: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Those three families of the Levites are designated in 1 Chronicles 25. They include the sons of Asaph, the sons of Heman, and the sons of Jeduthun. That's verse 1, "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service," that is to the service of the house of God, "of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun." They would have charge by turn of the ministry of music that was a part of the worship of God in the Old Testament house of God.

Their sons and these three fathers would be the first to take the lead in this ministry of music, the singing of the Psalms to the accompaniment of these instruments that are mentioned in the passage, and that would be the singing, the setting to song of the words that we have in the book of Psalms, the setting of those Psalms to song so that they could be sung as a part of the worship of God in the Old Testament. They didn't come up to the temple and sit down in pews that had Psalters in front of them with the words and the music listed. They didn't have books like that. They didn't have an organ and a piano to accompany the singing, to help the singing along, but this is what they had instead. They had these three sons of Levi, these three families who by turn would take their instruments, set the Psalms to music and accompany the singing of those Psalms in the public worship of God. That would be the way in which the whole congregation then would join in the worship of God through music.

Our text focuses on one of those three families, the family of Heman. That's verse 4, "Of Heman," then follow the names of the 14 sons of Heman as well as the notice that besides these 14 sons, Heman also was blessed with three daughters, 17 children altogether. Verse 5 adds, "All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters." And verse 6 concludes, "All these were under the hands of their father," of Heman, "for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman."

The text underscores the fact that Heman was a godly father. He was a godly man personally. He was a godly Levite. And he was a godly husband, faithful to his wife. But he was also a godly father, the godly father of 14 sons and three daughters. I call your attention tonight to "The Godly Father, Heman." Let's notice three things together. First of all, God's gift to this godly father; secondly, this godly father's faithfulness as that is recorded in our text; and thirdly, God's blessing upon this godly father.

The godly father of our text is Heman. His ancestry is significant. Obviously, he was a member of the tribe of Levi. According to 1 Chronicles 6:33, the first part of that verse, "And these are they that waited with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman a singer." He was a son of Kohath, the son of Levi. The other two who along with him were appointed to be over the ministry of music in the temple was one who was a son of Gershon, Asaph, and one who was a son of Merari, that's Jeduthun. By the way, Jeduthun is also referred to as Ethan. In some of the parallels, references to Jeduthun are to Ethan. They are one and the same.

So you have besides the house of Aaron which descends from Levi, specifically the family of Aaron, from Kohath the son of Levi, the families of the Levites who in addition to the priests who came from the family of Aaron, ministered in the house of God and assisted the work of the priests. Significantly, besides being from the family of Levi, a Levite, Heman was also a descendant of the godly prophet and judge, Samuel. That is striking. That's the latter part of 1 Chronicles 6:33, "And these are they that waited with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel." Shemuel is Samuel.

Heman is a grandson of Samuel. That is striking. His father was Joel. His father Joel is mentioned in 1 Samuel 8, the opening verses, in connection of the request of the children of Israel for a king. Those first verses of 1 Samuel 8 read, "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." Then that is one of the reasons, excuses, that the elders of Israel give to Samuel for requesting a king. Joel was his father, an ungodly man, a judge who perverted justice and took bribes and did not walk in the way of his father, Samuel, and to that Joel, that wicked Joel, was born the Heman of our text, an outstandingly godly man.

What can account for that? Given the fact that his father was ungodly and unbelieving, a rascal? The explanation may be that, of course, his mother feared God and brought her children up in the fear of God. Very likely that was the case, but it's also very likely part of the explanation, the influence of his grandfather, a grandfather, Samuel, on Heman his grandson. That only underscores how significant in influence grandparents are and can be on the lives of their grandchildren. Whatever the case, ultimately, of course, the explanation is the electing grace of God. God had seen fit to choose unto himself this Heman though he had not been pleased to choose unto himself his father, Joel.

Heman's personal godliness stands out in the passage. We know from what we read in 1 Chronicles what we read earlier in 1 Chronicles that Heman participated in David's bringing up of the ark of God to Jerusalem. He participated in that actively. You read about that in 1 Chronicles 16, the first verse, "So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God." And then later in the chapter in verses 41 and 42, "And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy endureth for ever; And with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun were porters." Heman participated actively in the bringing up of the ark of God, accompanying that bringing up of the ark of God with singing and with music.

Besides being a renowned musician, a godly man who used his music for the glory and praise of God, Heman was also renowned in Israel as a man of wisdom, an exceedingly wise man. We're not talking here merely about worldly wisdom but we're talking about wise in the things of God and in the ways of God. That comes out in 1 Kings 4 toward the end of that chapter and I remind you that the previous chapter, 1 Kings 3, is the account of God appearing to Solomon and Solomon's requesting wisdom. God gave to Solomon that wisdom so that he was the wisest man who ever lived, but then in 1 Kings 4, beginning at verse 29 we read, "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite," that's Jeduthun, that's that other name for him, "Jeduthun the Ezrahite, and Heman, and

Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about." Now Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of Heman but Heman is mentioned there as one of the wisest men who ever lived. Not as wise as Solomon. Solomon's wisdom exceeded that of Heman but that doesn't take away from the fact that Heman was an outstandingly wise man.

And then there is what we learn from our passage itself, 1 Chronicles 25. What we learn from the opening verses of the chapter, that Heman was a prophet of God. "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy." They didn't just play instruments, they prophesied. They used their music for the instruction and for the edification of the people of God. They prophesied "with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals." Then in verse 2, "Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied." They prophesied in their work as ministers of music accompanying the musical worship of God in the temple. They "prophesied according to the order of the king." In fact, in our text, Heman is referred to as the king's seer. The king's own prophet. That's what we read in verse 5, "All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God." That's what Heman was, he was a prophet of God. So great a prophet that he actually taught David and David's household. He was there in the royal family as the court preacher, if you will, who taught the truth of the word of God to David and to David's children and grandchildren.

Not only did Heman minister as a prophet of God to the king and to the king's family and, by the way, there are two others, Nathan and Gad, who are referred to as the king's seers, a very special kind of prophet in the Old Testament. But besides that, he ministered as a prophet of God in the public and corporate worship of the people of God as is plain from Psalm 88. Now that's a very striking Psalm. The heading of that Psalm indicates that the human writer of that Psalm was Heman. The whole contents of the Psalm make plain that Heman was a prophet of God. Not only his own personal godliness comes out in the Psalm over and over again from the very first words of Psalm 88, "O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry," but one who proclaimed the word of God to God's people. The whole rest of the Psalm is a Psalm of instruction, a Maschil, a doctrinal Psalm that gives instruction to the people of God, and by the way, the heading of Psalm 89 indicates that it was written by Jeduthun or Ethan, that co-laborer of Heman in the ministry of music in the first house of God.

To this godly servant of the Lord, God gave 14 sons and three daughters and that's what we read in the last part of verse 5, "And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters," and that is the focus of the text. The text does not intend merely to state a fact to inform us of a fact, the fact that Heman had 14 sons and three daughters, the fact even that God is the one who caused their conception and their birth to take place, as is always the case. From a certain point of view, God gives every human being their life and their existence. God is the one who causes conception and birth to take place. That's true even of the ungodly and of the reprobate wicked. But the point of the text, the point of the text is that this is how Heman regarded his children; this was his viewpoint; this is how he

looked upon his children. He regarded his children as gifts of God. This was the view that he had of them, not that they were a burden upon him, a financial strain, not that they were a hardship, but that they were a gift of God to him, his many children, 17 children.

And although his wife is not mentioned in the passage, we must believe that this was also the viewpoint that Heman's wife shared with him. She's not mentioned, to be sure, but undoubtedly she had the same attitude towards their children. She was, undoubtedly, the one mother, the one wife of Heman, the one mother of all these 17 children. According to Leviticus 21:13-15, a priest might not marry a widow, nor a divorced woman, nor an harlot, nor profane, that is an unbeliever, but he must marry a virgin, a virgin of the daughter of his people, and that's what Heman did. His one wife, a virgin of the daughter of his people, with her he had these 17 children, and with her, they regarded these 17 children as the gift of God to them.

His many children. This does not mean that every covenant home must be a home in which there are 10-12 or more children. Not at all. One thing that 1 Chronicles 25 makes very plain is that God limits our families. God did not give to the other two 17 children. God in his providence causes our families to vary in size. That's his will. That's his providence. One family has more children, another family has fewer children, and to some godly couples, God in his inscrutable wisdom does not give the gift of children, and sometimes I think we do not appreciate the burden, the hardship that that is. Baptism after baptism after baptism in Hope Church. They are confronted with the hard reality that God has not given them children. That is a grievous burden. We must believe that God is wise in doing that, that God has his own purposes, his own will, and we must believe that he gives grace too for that burden.

But on the other hand, it is God who gives us our children and we may not, that's the danger, that's the warning that I issue and am bold to issue tonight, we must not for selfish and self-centered reasons disdain the gift of God in children. That's the attitude of the world in which we live and my fear is that that attitude influences us and our families and the size of our families. The wicked world in which we live does not regard children, certainly many children, as a gift. They disdain the birth of children, prevent their birth, do everything they can to prevent their birth until they're ready to have the one or two maybe that they will be satisfied with. And how often don't they abort, strangle, those children that are already conceived? What a blood on the hands of our own nation in this regard.

Then besides that, the young and unmarried fornicate like dogs, contrary to the will of God that confines sexual relations to marriage and the bringing forth of children as one of God's good purposes connected to marriage, within the bonds of marriage where there is a father and a mother. What a plague on our own country of single parent families. It's a plague in our day and we're going to reap the fruits of that in the not to distant future. We are already reaping the fruits of that.

But that was not the attitude of Heman and his wife. Their attitude which is the attitude of believing couples in every age, is that our children and our grandchildren are gifts of

God. Because he received his children as gifts of God, Heman was faithful in the bringing up of those children in the fear of God. That, too, is the instruction of our text. Heman and his wife along with him, were faithful in bringing up their children, these gifts of God, in the covenant of God's grace.

He was faithful, first of all, in the example of his own life. Heman's own life, his own personal godliness was a reflection to his children of the faith that lived in the heart of their father. He showed them, really and practically he showed them that he was a man of God. His children saw that in their father. Do they see that in you fathers? Do your children see that?

The faithful example of Heman showed itself especially in the consistency in Heman's own life between what he taught his children and how he lived. Of course, Heman was not perfect. God isn't pleased to use perfect parents to bring up covenant children. He's the only perfect parent. He is pleased to use weak and sinful means and that's what we all are at our best. We know that. It grieves us. It grieves us especially when you become a grandfather like me. It grieves you.

But God is pleased, nevertheless, to use godly parents, not perfect parents, but godly parents, for the instruction of their children and that was Heman. He lived what he taught them. He was an example to them. He didn't say to his children, "Listen here, you seek first the kingdom of God," and then they saw him chasing after the things of this world. He didn't say to them, "Look here, you set your heart and your hope upon the things of heaven, the things that are enduring," and then they saw him setting his heart upon the things that moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal away, that his treasure wasn't earthly treasure. He didn't say to them, "Now you remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," but then himself used the Sabbath day for his own vacations, his own travel, his own pleasure, his own business. It wasn't the case. They saw consistency in his life. They saw striving, a striving in their father and in their mother, be consistent in their own life through what they taught their children.

In the second place, Heman was faithful in the instruction of his children. It wasn't only his example but it was the positive instruction that he gave to his sons and to his daughters. He taught his 14 sons and he taught his three daughters. He took them on his knee when they were very tiny and told them the Bible stories. He took the time to teach them the truths of the word of God as they were growing up into young manhood and young womanhood. He was a prophet. He was a seer in the word of God, the text teaches. It wasn't that first of all in David's household, it was that in his own household, his own family, and his own children.

That's the calling. That's the calling of the parents in the congregation tonight. All of you who have presented your sons and daughters for baptism and stood up here and taken those vows publicly, that's your call, the instruction of your children.

He was concerned to teach his children the truth of God is manifest in the names that he gave to his children. Those names are important. They're an important aspect of Heman's

determination to teach his children, to teach his sons the fear of God. Now there is something else, of course. The very fact that he gave them these names is an expression of his own personal godliness and the godliness of his wife; that they would give them these kinds of names indicate their own personal godliness. But I believe the names are mentioned in the text more significantly to underscore the instruction that he gave to his children. Here's the thing. This is what we aim at, isn't it, parents? Not just that, they hear us, that they remember what we say, that they don't forget the instruction that they receive from us and from the Christian school and in the church. Never forget it.

That's the significance of those names. They can't get away from their name and from the testimony of their own names to the truth of God and the word of God, that's the thing. Every one of those names in some explicitly and others by implication, there is reference to God and to the truth of God. Bukkiah, the ah at the end, the a-h at the end of a name in the Old Testament stands for Jehovah. Bukkiah, mouth of Jehovah; mouthpiece of Jehovan; one who would speak the word of God and be a witness for Jehovah God in his life. Mattaniah, gift of Jehovah. That's how they regarded their children, remember, and now they expressed that in the name that they give to their second son, gift of Jehovah, but he must never forget Jehovah whose gift he is. Uzziel, the el at the end of a name or at the beginning of a name stands for God, the Old Testament Elohim. Uzziel, God is my strength. Shebuel, there it is again, God is my renown or my honor. It's not worldly things, possessions, accomplishments, God, God is my honor. Jerimoth, heights or elevation. That may refer to the exaltation of Jehovah God or it may be a reference to the worship of God in the heights that Jerusalem was built as it was upon Mount Zion. In either way, height or elevation, has to do with God and the worship of God. Hananiah, Jehovah, there's the a-h again at the end of the name. Hananiah, Jehovah is gracious. Hanani, grace to me. A beautiful name, Hanani, grace to me. Eliathah, the el at the beginning, God is come. Giddalti, Jehovah has made great, made me great or made his people great. One or the other. Romantiezer, highest help. That's God, our highest help. Joshbekashah, seated in solemnity. That's God on his throne, God in his majesty. Mallothi, Jehovah is speaking. Hothir, abundance. That's what God gives to his covenant people, the abundance of the riches of his covenant of grace. And Mahazioth, visions of God, and that may refer to the way in which God in the Old Testament made his will known to his people, revealed himself to his people, to Heman, the king's seer, by vision and direct revelation. But the point is that the names would be a constant reminder to these sons who bore these names. Oh, I wish I knew the names of those daughters but it wasn't God's will to incorporate them. But what a testimony with which they would constantly live as a reminder to them of the instruction that their godly father had given to them.

Thirdly, Heman's faithfulness in rearing his children besides the example that he set and the instruction that he gave them, was that he taught them the truth concerning Jesus Christ. The cross. The blood of the Savior, Jesus Christ. That's plain, of course. Where did he minister? Where did they already as young children minister with their father? In the temple. And what was the reality of the temple and the worship of God in the temple? What could you not but be impressed with when you went to a worship service in the temple? It was sacrifice. It was the shedding of blood. It was the bringing of the

offerings. Offering after offering after offering and what did all those offerings point to? To the fellowship that we enjoy with God. That's the temple and tabernacle of God with us but only in the way of the blood. We're sinners, you see, damn-worthy, guilty sinners in need of the blood and of the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ. Heman taught his children their need for the forgiveness of their sins and he brought them to the foot of the cross, that forgiveness is to be found.

Read Psalm 88. It's a strikingly messianic Psalm. It's a Psalm in which Christ himself, really, is speaking. Just look at the last verses, "Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." That's not Heman, that's Christ. That's Jesus Christ. He taught his children the truth concerning Christ.

Oh, people of God, this is what we parents and we grandparents must impress upon our children. Do we do that? You presented them for baptism, after all, and the water of baptism symbolizes the blood of Christ that washes away their sins and symbolizes there for the need that they have for that washing and that cleansing which need is their sin and the guilt of their sin. Teach them their need of Christ as sinners. Teach them the satisfaction of that need of theirs and the cross of the Son of God, the substitute who died in our place on our behalf, and teach them the debt of gratitude that we owe to this God and Father and to our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, on account of his so-great salvation. Teach them this in your homes. Teach them this in the congregation in which you are members. Teach them this. See to it that they are taught this in the Christian school to which you send them.

God richly blessed godly Heman, this godly father and his wife with him. That blessing was that he saw his sons and his daughters walking with them in the fear of God, joining them Sabbath after Sabbath after Sabbath for the worship of God in the house of God where they joined their father and their grandfather in the worship of God and in the ministry of music that accompanied the worship of God there. God blessed this faithful father, these faithful parents, not because of their faithfulness, never because, we know that. We know that who know how weak and sinful we are and what failures are ours in regard to the bringing up of our children. Not because of our faithfulness but nevertheless in the way of our faithfulness God is pleased to bless us and God is pleased to use us. He doesn't need any one of us but he is pleased to use us and to bless us.

At the same time, there's the warning right there. Take it to heart tonight. God judges and God punishes those who will not devote themselves to the godly instruction of their children, who in the end do not regard their children as the gifts of God, who disdain God's gifts, who abuse God's gifts, who neglect God's gifts. God punishes them for that disdain and that neglect and often he punishes them in their children themselves. He cuts them off in their generations. That is the judgment of God.

But God blessed Heman and God blessed him in his generations. That's a very striking thing. There is so much of significance in the history here but that is something else. It's

striking that some of Heman's descendants played key roles in the two great revivals and reformations in the history of Judah: the great reformation under King Hezekiah and the great reformation under King Josiah. In both instances, there are children, that is, descendants of Heman who are involved. That's striking. In the case of the reformation under good King Hezekiah, read 2 Chronicles 29:14 where specific mention is made of the sons of Heman. In connection with the reformation under good King Josiah, I recommend that you read 2 Chronicles 35. Pay attention to verse 15 where once again the sons of Heman are referred to. God blessed them, Heman and his wife, in their generations. By the time of Hezekiah, Josiah, they are long dead, they're in heaven, but their descendants are still walking in the fear of God and their descendants to the third and fourth generation are still ministering in the house of God, the temple, and they're involved in the true worship of God in those two great reformation movements.

What a blessing of God upon Heman. That blessing is indicated by the middle of verse 5, "to lift up the horn." That's not a reference to a musical instrument, a trumpet of some kind, but it refers figuratively to God's exaltation of Heman, his exaltation by God. That expression means that in the Old Testament Scriptures, I refer you for example to Psalm 148:14, the last verse of Psalm 148, "He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD." That's God's blessing. He exalts the horn of his people.

And now that had been the prayer of Heman's great grandmother. His great grandmother was Hannah, godly Hannah, who brought her son, Samuel, to minister before God in the temple, the tabernacle. And after she brought him, she prayed over her son and this is included in her prayer to God, 1 Samuel 2:10, "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." He did. He answered the prayer of that godly great grandmother of Heman. He answered it by exalting her horn in her generations. He honored Heman and he honored Heman in his 14 sons and three daughters. You see, they who honor God are honored by God. That was true of Heman and that is still true today. Amen.

Father in heaven, we give thanks for thy word, a joyful word, a sobering word, a word that confronts believing parents with their calling with regard to their covenant children. We pray, heavenly Father, that the word preached in weakness tonight may be a means of grace in the congregation and may serve for the upbuilding of the saints here. We pray that like godly Heman, we may receive our children as gifts from God and receiving them as thy gifts, bring them up in the fear of thy name and to the glory of thy name. Forgive our sins. Dismiss us with thy blessing. For Christ's sake. Amen.