

The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 3: Levi, the Tribes, and the Returned Remnant

1 Chronicles 6:1–9:34

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this lesson teaches that God cares deeply how He is worshiped and that He preserves a worshiping people for Himself. The ordered Levitical system, with its priests, singers, and gatekeepers, shows a God who is approached on His terms, not ours. The teacher must draw the line forward carefully: the Levitical priesthood and temple were a shadow that finds its substance in Christ, our great High Priest, and in the church, the spiritual house and holy priesthood. We honor what the old order taught about reverence and order in worship, while making clear that Christians are not bound to the Levitical system but worship under the New Covenant according to the apostolic pattern.

The transformational aim is twofold. First, the lesson calls every member to see his or her role in the body as significant, refusing the lie that only visible service counts. The gatekeeper mattered to God; so does the quiet servant in the Lord's church today. Second, the lesson calls the class to reverence and faithful obedience in worship, approaching God with the seriousness these chapters model rather than with casual, self-styled religion.

Finally, the lesson aims to stir gratitude and hope. God preserved a worshiping remnant through exile, and He preserves His people still. The class should leave thankful that God kept them through their own hard seasons and confident that He will keep His church to the end, while resolving to take their own part in His worship with renewed seriousness and joy.

Question 1

Student Question:

What does the careful ordering of priests, singers, and gatekeepers in chapter 6 reveal about God's concern that He be worshiped according to His own instruction rather than human preference?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 6 is devoted to the tribe of Levi, and its detail is purposeful. The Chronicler traces the high-priestly line from Levi through Aaron and his sons, lists the descendants of Levi's three sons Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, names the singers David set over the service of song at the house of the LORD, and records the cities allotted to the Levites throughout Israel. This is the infrastructure of Israel's worship, laid out with care.

What stands out is that none of this was improvised. The priesthood belonged to Aaron's line by God's appointment. The singers ministered in an order David established under inspiration. The Levitical cities were assigned by divine command going back to Moses and Joshua. Israel did not invent her worship; she received it. God specified how He would be approached.

This reflects a consistent biblical principle: God cares not only that He be worshiped but how He be worshiped. From the fire of Nadab and Abihu to the careful instructions for the tabernacle, the Old Testament repeatedly shows that worship offered on human terms, however sincere, is not acceptable when it departs from God's instruction. Reverence includes obedience.

For the returned remnant, restoring this order was urgent. To be God's people again meant to worship as God directed, with the right people in the right roles doing the right things. The Chronicler's careful list was a blueprint for getting worship right, and a reminder that the God who saved them is holy and is to be approached as He has commanded.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's concern not only that He be worshiped but how He be worshiped
- Israel received her worship from God rather than inventing it
- Reverence includes obedience to God's instruction, not merely sincerity
- The priesthood and worship order established by divine appointment
- Restoring right worship as central to being God's people again

Discussion Prompts

- What does the ordered, God-assigned structure of Israel's worship reveal about God's character?
- Why does sincerity alone not guarantee that worship is acceptable to God?
- How does this passage challenge the modern assumption that worship is mainly about personal preference?

Question 2

Student Question:

Where are you tempted to approach worship casually or on your own terms, and what would it look like to bring God the reverence these chapters model?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

There is a strong pull in our culture, and even in our own hearts, to approach worship casually and on our own terms, choosing what we like and discarding what we do not. The careful order of Levi confronts that instinct. If God cared this much about how He was approached under the old order, He is not indifferent now.

This is not a call to cold formalism but to reverence. The point is not stiffness but seriousness, the recognition that we are coming before the holy God who redeemed us. Casualness often reveals not freedom but a low view of who God is.

Examine your own approach. Do you prepare your heart to worship, or do you arrive distracted and leave unchanged? Do you submit to God's instruction for worship, or do you quietly edit it to suit your taste? The Levites teach us to take the act of approaching God seriously.

Encourage the class toward concrete reverence: preparing for the Lord's Day, engaging the heart and not just the body, and submitting to God's revealed pattern rather than personal preference. Reverence is learned and practiced, not merely felt.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Approaching worship casually or on our own terms versus with reverence
- Reverence as seriousness about who God is, not cold formalism
- Preparing the heart to worship rather than arriving distracted
- Submitting to God's pattern over personal taste in worship

Discussion Prompts

- Where has your approach to worship grown casual or self-styled?
- What does genuine reverence look like in practice, as opposed to mere formality?
- What is one way you can better prepare your heart to worship this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

Why does the Chronicler record the specific roles of singers and gatekeepers alongside the priests, and what does that teach about the value of every servant in God's house?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The Chronicler does not record only the priests; he carefully names the singers and the gatekeepers. The singers stood and ministered with music, the gatekeepers guarded the thresholds of the house of God, watching over the chambers and the treasuries and opening the gates morning by morning. These were not glamorous posts, yet they were recorded with honor.

This teaches a profound truth about the value of every servant in God's house. The man who guarded a gate was as truly serving God as the priest who offered the sacrifice. Each role was assigned, each was needed, and each was remembered. There is no insignificant service in the work of the Lord.

The temptation, then as now, is to rank roles by visibility and to assume that only the prominent ones matter. The Chronicler's roster refuses that ranking. The gatekeeper's faithfulness mattered to God, and so the gatekeeper's name was written down.

This anticipates what Paul would later teach about the body of Christ, that the parts which seem less honorable are indispensable and that God has arranged the body so that there is no division. The same God who valued the gatekeeper values the quiet servant in the Lord's church today. Every faithful role matters to Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The value of every servant's role, from priest to gatekeeper
- No insignificant service in the work of God
- Resisting the ranking of roles by visibility or prominence
- Anticipating the body of Christ where every member is needed (1 Corinthians 12)
- God remembers and honors faithful, unglamorous service

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the Chronicler honor singers and gatekeepers alongside priests?
- How does this challenge the way we tend to rank roles in the church?
- Who are the gatekeepers in your congregation, and how can we honor their service?

Question 4

Student Question:

What is your role in the body of Christ, and how might God be calling you to serve faithfully in a place you have been overlooking or undervaluing?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

If the gatekeeper's role mattered to God, then your role matters too. Many believers quietly conclude that their service is too minor to count, that the real work belongs to the preachers, elders, and teachers, and that the rest of us are spectators. These chapters dismantle that conclusion.

In the body of Christ every member has a function, and the body suffers when any part withholds itself thinking it unimportant. The nursery worker, the one who prepares the Lord's Supper, the visitor of the sick, the encourager, all are doing the work of God just as truly as those in front.

Ask yourself honestly whether you have been undervaluing your part, or perhaps neglecting a role God is calling you to take up. The kingdom does not advance only through visible service; it advances through the faithful sum of many quiet servants doing their part.

Press the class to identify their actual role in the body and to commit to serving it faithfully, or to step into a place of service they have been avoiding because it seemed too small to matter.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The lie that only visible service in the church really counts
- Every member has a needed function in the body of Christ
- Undervaluing or neglecting one's own role
- Stepping into faithful service rather than remaining a spectator

Discussion Prompts

- What is your actual role in the body of Christ right now?
- Have you been undervaluing your part or avoiding a place of service? Why?
- What is one way you will serve faithfully in your role this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

What does the return of the priests, Levites, and gatekeepers to Jerusalem in chapter 9 reveal about God's commitment to preserve a worshiping people even through judgment?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 9 marks a turning point. After chapters of past genealogies, the Chronicler records those who returned from exile and resettled in Jerusalem: the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, and the ordinary families who came home. He notes their duties, the gatekeepers stationed at the four sides, the Levites in charge of the chambers and the holy things, those responsible for the showbread and the utensils. Worship was being restored.

This is one of the great encouragements of the book. The exile had looked like the end of Israel's worship. The temple was destroyed, the people scattered, the songs silenced. And yet here, on the far side of judgment, the servants are back at their posts and the praise is rising again. God preserved for Himself a worshiping people.

The Chronicler wants his readers to grasp that their very presence in Jerusalem, serving in the house of God, was a miracle of preservation. They were the living proof that judgment had not been God's final word. He disciplines His people, but He does not abandon them. He keeps a remnant.

This reveals God's deep commitment to having a people who worship Him. He will purify, He will discipline, He will allow the fire, but He will not let the worship of His name die out from the earth. The candle that flickered in exile is burning again in Jerusalem because God Himself kept it lit.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's commitment to preserve a worshipping people through judgment
- The returned remnant as living proof that judgment was not God's final word
- God disciplines His people but does not abandon them
- The restoration of worship after exile as a miracle of preservation
- God keeps a faithful remnant in every generation

Discussion Prompts

- What does the return of the temple servants to Jerusalem reveal about God?
- How is the very existence of the worshipping remnant a testimony to God's faithfulness?
- What does it mean that God disciplines His people but will not let their worship die out?

Question 6

Student Question:

Where have you experienced God preserving your faith or your worship through a hard season, and have you given Him thanks for keeping you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

God preserves His worshipping people corporately, and He preserves them one by one as well. Most of us can look back on a season when our faith might have died, a grief, a doubt, a wandering, a wound, and yet here we are, still worshipping. That is not an accident of our own strength; it is the keeping power of God.

The remnant in Jerusalem could testify that they had been carried through the fire and brought home. Many in our classes can testify the same: I should have walked away, but God held me. I was far off, but He drew me back. The right response to such keeping is deep, specific gratitude.

Gratitude for preservation also fuels endurance. The God who kept you through the last hard season can be trusted with the next one. Remembering His faithfulness in the past is one of the chief ways we strengthen ourselves to keep going.

Invite the class to recall a specific season when God preserved their faith or their worship, and to name their thanks to Him aloud or in prayer, letting that memory steady them for whatever lies ahead.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's preservation of individual faith through hard seasons
- Our continued worship as evidence of God's keeping power, not our own strength
- Specific gratitude for preservation
- Remembering past faithfulness as fuel for present endurance

Discussion Prompts

- Recall a season when your faith or worship might have died. How did God keep you?
- Have you ever thanked God specifically for preserving you through it?
- How does remembering His past keeping strengthen you for what lies ahead?

Question 7

Student Question:

How does the order and assignment of the Levites show that faithfulness in worship involves obedience to God's pattern and not merely sincere intentions?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The order and assignment of the Levites underline that faithfulness in worship involves obedience to God's pattern and not merely sincere intentions. The priests offered according to the law, the singers ministered in the order God established through David, the gatekeepers kept the charge assigned to them. Faithfulness meant doing what God commanded, in the way God commanded.

This is a vital corrective. We sometimes assume that as long as our hearts are sincere, the form does not matter. But the Old Testament repeatedly shows that God rejects worship that is sincere yet disobedient. Nadab and Abihu offered fire, but it was unauthorized fire, and they died. Sincerity is necessary but not sufficient; God also requires obedience to His revealed will.

The principle carries forward. Under the New Covenant we are not under the Levitical law, but the underlying truth abides: God has revealed how His people are to worship and live, and faithfulness means submitting to that revelation rather than substituting our own ideas. We seek the authority of Scripture for what we do.

Help the class see that loving God includes obeying Him, that worship is not a blank canvas for our creativity but a response shaped by His word. Sincere intentions are good, but they must be joined to careful obedience to be acceptable to God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Faithfulness in worship requires obedience to God's pattern, not only sincerity
- God can reject sincere but disobedient worship (Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus 10)
- Seeking the authority of Scripture for what we do in worship
- Love for God expressed through obedience to His revealed will
- Worship as response to God's word, not a canvas for human invention

Discussion Prompts

- Why is sincerity necessary but not sufficient for acceptable worship?

- What does the careful assignment of the Levites teach about obedience?
- How do we seek God's authority for what we do rather than our own preferences?

Question 8

Student Question:

In what area of your service to God have you been relying on good intentions rather than careful obedience, and how will you correct that?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

It is easy to drift into relying on good intentions rather than careful obedience. We mean well, we feel sincere, and we assume that is enough. But the Levites remind us that God joins the heart and the act, the intention and the obedience. Faithfulness is not merely meaning well; it is doing His will.

Examine your own service. Are there places where you have substituted enthusiasm for obedience, where you do what seems good to you rather than what God has actually directed? Sincerity can become a cover for ignoring or reshaping God's instruction.

The correction is to return to the word. Where God has spoken about how we are to worship and serve and live, faithfulness means submitting to that, even when our own ideas seem more appealing. Good intentions are meant to drive us to obedience, not to excuse its absence.

Challenge the class to identify one area where they have been coasting on intentions and to bring it back under the authority of Scripture this week, asking not what feels right to them but what God has actually said.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Relying on good intentions rather than careful obedience
- Substituting enthusiasm or feeling for submission to God's word
- Returning to Scripture as the authority for service and worship
- Joining sincere heart to faithful obedience

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you been relying on good intentions instead of careful obedience?
- How can sincerity become a cover for ignoring God's instruction?
- What is one area you will bring back under the authority of Scripture this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

How does the Levitical priesthood and temple service foreshadow Christ as our great High Priest and the church as a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5,9; Hebrews 7–10), and why must we not bind the Old Covenant Levitical system on Christians today?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now we reach the doctrinal heart of the lesson: the Levitical priesthood and temple service were a shadow that finds their substance in Christ and His church, and we must not bind the Old Covenant system on Christians today. The whole elaborate structure of priests, sacrifices, and temple in these chapters was, as Hebrews teaches, a copy and shadow of heavenly things, pointing forward to a greater priest and a better sacrifice.

Consider the high priest. In chapter 6 the Chronicler traces a long line of high priests, generation after generation, because each one died and had to be replaced. Hebrews 7 seizes on exactly this: the former priests were many because death prevented them from continuing, but Jesus holds His priesthood permanently because He lives forever, and therefore He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him. The endless Levitical line points to the one eternal Priest who needs no successor.

Consider the sacrifices. The Levites offered the same sacrifices repeatedly, day after day, because no animal blood could take away sin. Hebrews 10 declares that Christ, by a single offering of Himself, has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. The repeated offerings of the temple pointed to the one final offering at the cross. We do not return to those shadows; we rest in the substance.

And consider the priesthood itself. Under the old order, only Aaron's descendants could serve as priests. But Peter declares that all Christians are now a holy and royal priesthood, a people belonging to God, called to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ and to proclaim His praises. The church is the true temple, a spiritual house, and every believer a priest with direct access to God through our great High Priest. This is the glorious fulfillment toward which Levi pointed.

Therefore we must be clear: we do not bind the Levitical system on Christians. We do not need an earthly priesthood standing between us and God, nor a physical temple in Jerusalem, nor animal sacrifices, nor the ceremonial law of Moses. All of that was a shadow whose substance has come. To go back to it would be to abandon the better covenant for the inferior copy. We honor what Levi taught about reverence, order, and the holiness of God, and we worship now under the New Covenant, through Christ, as the priesthood He has made us, according to the apostolic pattern.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Levitical priesthood and temple as a shadow fulfilled in Christ (Hebrews 8–10)
- Christ the one permanent High Priest replacing the dying line of priests (Hebrews 7:23–28)

- Christ's single sacrifice ending the repeated Levitical offerings (Hebrews 10:11–14)
- All Christians as a holy and royal priesthood with direct access to God (1 Peter 2:5,9)
- The church as the true spiritual temple
- Not binding the Old Covenant Levitical system, priesthood, temple, or ceremonial law on Christians
- Worshiping now under the New Covenant according to the apostolic pattern

Discussion Prompts

- How does the dying line of high priests in chapter 6 point to Christ in Hebrews 7?
- What does it mean that every Christian is now a priest (1 Peter 2:5,9)?
- Why would it be a step backward to bind the Levitical system on Christians today?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across the worship of Levi and the homecoming of the remnant, name one specific way Jesus is shaping you into a faithful worshiper through this passage.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Draw the lesson to a point. We have seen God's care for ordered worship, the value of every servant, the preservation of a worshiping remnant, and the fulfillment of the whole priestly system in Christ and His church. All of it converges on one question: what kind of worshiper is Jesus shaping you to be?

The capstone asks for something specific. Perhaps God is calling you to deeper reverence, having grown casual. Perhaps He is calling you to take up your role in the body, having undervalued it. Perhaps He is calling you to gratitude for His keeping, or to obedience over mere intention, or to a fresh wonder at being made a priest with direct access to God through Christ.

Whatever it is, the worship of Levi was never meant to leave us as observers of an ancient institution. It is meant to make us better worshipers now, under the new and better covenant, offering ourselves as living sacrifices to the God who kept a people for Himself.

Close by inviting each person to name one specific way they will be a more faithful worshiper this week, turning the lesson into worship that continues long after the class is over.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Becoming a more faithful worshiper under the New Covenant
- Integrating reverence, service, gratitude, and obedience into one response
- Living as the priesthood Christ has made us, offering spiritual sacrifices
- Being formed into the likeness of Christ our High Priest

Discussion Prompts

- What kind of worshiper is Jesus shaping you to be through this passage?
- Which part of the lesson, reverence, service, gratitude, or obedience, most calls to you?
- Name one specific way you will worship God more faithfully this week.