

Who was Jeduthun in the Bible?

The name Jeduthun means “lauder” or “praising.” It was an apt name for the Levite named Jeduthun we read about in the Bible, because he was one of David’s chief musicians (1 Chronicles 16:41-42; 2 Chronicles 35:15; Psalm 39:1). The other choir directors mentioned in the Psalms and 1 Chronicles were Asaph and Heman. Several psalms were designated for each of these three directors, which may indicate that each specialized in a different kind of music. Psalms 39, 62, and 77 are assigned to Jeduthun, indicating that his choir or musicians were to lead the congregation on those songs.

Many scholars consider Jeduthun to be identical to the Ethan mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:17. First Chronicles 25:3 tells us that Jeduthun’s sons, Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, also joined him in playing the harp, cymbals, and lyre. Second Chronicles 35:15 also calls Jeduthun the “king’s seer,” which implies that he not only led music for David, but he also prophesied God’s words to him.

The study of men like Jeduthun, Asaph, and Heman reminds us that God takes music seriously. He has gifted certain people with musical talent and passion and expects them to invest those gifts in His service. With Jeduthun, the gifts of music and prophecy were closely intertwined, and God used Him in both areas. God still combines music and prophecy when we worship. He can speak to us through music, through the Psalms, and through giving us a “new song” to sing to Him (Psalm 144:9; Isaiah 43:10). He draws, convicts, and inspires us when we offer up musical worship and praise. Whether a psalm was to be led by Asaph, Heman, or Jeduthun, we can still enjoy the beauty and power of those songs and gain insights from the men who wrote and directed them.