

A Time of Praise and Worship in Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 16

1 Chronicles 16:1-3 - *“So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had erected for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. ² When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. ³ Then he distributed a loaf of bread, a cake of dates, and a cake of raisins to each Israelite man and woman.”*

Background Notes

In 1 Chronicles 15 a great celebration took place as the Ark of the Covenant was brought up to Jerusalem. In chapter 16 the Ark was placed in a special tent that David had prepared for it, and burnt offerings and peace offerings were presented to the Lord (v1). This tent was not the Tabernacle. At this time the Tabernacle and its furnishings, including the bronze altar, was in Gibeon, six miles northwest of Jerusalem.

David was wearing a linen ephod, usually worn by priests, when the Ark was brought up to its tent in Jerusalem (15:27). Does this mean that David himself was conducting the sacrifices, either along the way or in the first two verses of chapter 16? No. Even little Samuel wore a linen ephod as a child (1 Samuel 2:18). And David had many priests with him to perform the actual sacrificing of the animals on his behalf.

Chapter 16 tells us there was a great time of praise and worship in Jerusalem. And David's personal gifts of bread, dates and raisins (as tokens of God's blessing on the Land) promoted a spirit of praise and worship among the people. As we read this chapter we'll find some important lessons about worship.

Doctrinal Points

1. Worship of the Lord should include praise.

1 Chronicles 16:4-7 - *“He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the Lord God of Israel: ⁵ Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals. ⁶ Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly blew the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God.*

⁷ *On that day David first delivered this psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the Lord.*” David didn’t just hope that praise and worship would happen - he made sure it happened! He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the Ark of the Lord to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel (v4). And David made sure that music was included. As we saw in chapter 15, music causes people’s voices to be raised in song, with resounding joy and praise to the Lord! *“Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy” (15:16).*

Singing songs of praise results in joyful praise to the Lord, and God is worshiped. Structuring a worship service with praise songs that are sung along with instrumental music results in joyful praise and true worship of the Lord. Questions about whether to use hymnals or projected words, or how many drums and guitars and trumpets to use (or using loud cymbals like David’s praise band), or a piano or organ only – different fellowships can answer these kinds of questions for themselves. The point is to use whatever program promotes joyful praise to the Lord from **most** of the congregation. Joyful praise is part of worship! Worship of the Lord should promote praise!

2. Worship of the Lord should have content.

Verses 8-36 are the hymn of thanksgiving that was sung on this occasion. It’s a medley of several psalms that were probably composed earlier by David. Verses 8-22 are from Psalm 105, verses 23-33 are from Psalm 96, and verses 34-36 are from Psalm 106.

My point here - and I believe it’s an important point – is: in their praise and worship, the people didn’t just sing “Hallelujah!” or “Praise the Lord!” over and over again, repetitively. No. They sang a hymn of praise that was **filled with content!**

In verses 8-14, the people praised God for His works, His wonders and marvels, and even praised Him for His judgments. *“Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples! ⁹ Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him. Talk of all His wondrous works! ¹⁰ Glory in His holy name. Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! ¹¹ Seek the Lord and His strength. Seek His face evermore! ¹² Remember His marvelous works that He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, ¹³ O seed of Israel His servant, you children of Jacob, His chosen ones! ¹⁴ He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth.”*

In verses 15-19 the people praised the Lord for His covenant with them as His chosen people, including His promise of the Land. *“Remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance when you were few in number, indeed very few, and strangers in it.”*

In verses 20-22 the people praised God for His constant protection, even when they wandered away from Him.

“When they went from one nation to another, and from one kingdom to another people, ²¹ He permitted no man to do them wrong. Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes, ²² saying, “Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm.”

In verses 23-29 the people praised God for His glory, His majesty, and His supremacy above all the gods made by human hands. *“Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. ²⁴ Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. ²⁵ For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is also to be feared above all gods. ²⁶ For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. ²⁷ Honor and majesty are before Him. Strength and gladness are in His place.*

²⁸ Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples. Give to the Lord glory and strength. ²⁹ Give to the Lord the glory due His name. Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!”

In verses 30-33, the people praised the Lord that He is in sovereign control over all the earth and its inhabitants.

“Tremble before Him, all the earth. The world also is firmly established. It shall not be moved. ³¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, and let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns.” ³² Let the sea roar, and all its fullness. Let the field rejoice, and all that is in it. ³³ Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth.”

In verses 34-36 the people praised the Lord for His goodness, His loving-kindness, His deliverance, and His salvation.

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. ³⁵ And say, “Save us, O God of our salvation, gather us together, and deliver us from the Gentiles, to give thanks to Your holy name, to triumph in Your praise.” ³⁶ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! And all the people said, “Amen!” and praised the Lord.”

This hymn of praise is **filled with theology!** No wonder worship was the result! This should characterize our worship today. The Lord said that true worship is in Spirit and **in truth** (John 4:23). Worship of the Lord should have content!

3. Worship of the Lord should be continual.

1 Chronicles 16:37-43 - *“So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister before the ark regularly, as every day’s work required; ³⁸ and Obed-Edom with his sixty-eight brethren, including Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, to be gatekeepers; ³⁹ and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the Lord at the high place that was at Gibeon, ⁴⁰ to offer burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of burnt offering regularly morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the Law of the Lord which He*

commanded Israel; ⁴¹ and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the Lord, because His mercy endures forever. ⁴² And with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun were gatekeepers. ⁴³ Then all the people departed, every man to his house, and David returned to bless his house.”

Notice that the Lord was worshiped **continually** – both in Jerusalem, where the Ark of the Covenant was located, and in Gibeon, where the Tabernacle and bronze altar were located. David appointed Zadok the priest to be in charge of the worship at Gibeon, where burnt offerings were sacrificed every morning and every evening, according to the Law of the Lord. There was continual worship!

And that's certainly a lesson for us. Do we worship the Lord continually by the way we live our lives every day? Or do we worship only on Sunday? Do we spend time with the Lord every day - or do we sometimes skip time with Him because of pressing responsibilities? What about family worship? Do we have a family devotional time every day - or are we too busy to get the family together for prayer each day?

King David made sure that Israel's worship of the Lord was regular and continual - and we should do the same. It's not easy. It's not automatic. **It takes dedication and discipline and sacrifice.** But God will be honored and glorified, and our hearts and lives will be blessed. Worship of the Lord should be continual!

Practical Application

Have a good definition of worship!

We've been talking a lot about worship in this chapter. But what is worship? Do you know a good definition of worship? Worship is not defined by emotional feelings, and it's not limited to formal church services. Here's a good concise working definition of worship: **Acknowledging who God is and what God does, to God Himself, with reverence, and love, and joy.**

Worship of the Lord is quite broad in its scope. It's not just singing songs on Sunday morning! We worship our sovereign God continually **by living lives of joyful obedience that bring honor to Him.** In fact, service to others out of a joyful heart is true worship. Worship is a way of life!

So if you're wondering, "Am I truly worshipping the Lord?" - maybe this working definition of worship will be helpful to you. Know a good definition of worship!