



TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Articles

WORSHIP TOGETHER

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A sermon study of the passage noted that 1 Chronicles 16:1-36 is a compilation, attributed to Asaph, of (in order) Psalms 105, 96 and 106. Having transferred the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, David charged the Levites to offer worship that *remembered*, *gave thanks*, and *praised* the Lord (v 4).

They were called to remember the major historical events recorded in Psalm 105:1-15 (1 Chron. 16:8-22). They praised by using Psalm 96:1-13 (1 Chron. 16:23-33). Their thanksgiving was drawn from Psalm 106:1, 47-48 (1 Chron. 16:34-36).

First Chronicles 16 teaches the necessity of thoughtful worship. We cannot give God the glory due his name (1 Chron. 16:29) unless we know what that glory involves. We cannot know that without recalling God's nature and works. Put another way, we cannot be good worshipers unless we have a good recall of Bible history. The better we know the story in which we share, the greater will be the depth of our response in giving God the glory that is his due.

Any "celebration" (1 Chron. 16:4, NASB) that attaches to our worship should flow naturally from our knowledge of God's nature and works.

The above summarizes the main ideas of the sermon I preached on 1 Chronicles 16. Time constraints and the focus on thoughtful worship did not allow me to develop another important observation from our text. As Mark Shipp said, "it is striking that in the Chronicler's psalm, blessings and benefits to *individual* Israelites are nowhere emphasized. The emphasis is rather upon God who is and what he has done and on the *community's* response to a gracious God ('Save *us* and deliver *us*!')" ("Congregational Song Is In Trouble': What Makes a Good Hymn?" *Christian Studies* 19 [2003]: 25; my emphasis)

If we're familiar with our story as developed through both testaments, we're not surprised to see that emphasis. Salvation is personal, and God used individuals to

complete his plan. But, the story and its aim are always about a people, a *community* of believers who are part of something together.

Citizens of the United States have often idealized the “rugged individualist.” We currently live in a time when our mobility has led to a situation where church assemblies often seem to be populated by sundry individuals who happen to have gathered in the same place to observe personal rites.

In light of so much emphasis on the individual and personal salvation, we should think more about the biblical focus on *community* worship and what it means for our need to regularly gather, the way we do things when we gather, the activities that we will let keep us from gathering, and what we are missing if, in our gathering, we focus more on our individual needs than on the common life we share as a *people*.

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