

CHAPTER 16

This chapter concludes that great affair of the settlement of the ark in the royal city, and with it the settlement of the public worship of God during the reign of David. Here is,

- I.** The solemnity with which the ark was fixed (v. 1-6).
- II.** The psalm David gave to be sung on this occasion (v. 7-36).
- III.** The settling of the stated public worship of God in order thenceforward (v. 37-43).

1 CHRONICLES 16:1-6

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ARK

It was a glorious day when the ark of God was safely lodged in the tent David had pitched for it. That good man had his heart much upon it, could not sleep contentedly till it was done, ~~1360~~ Psalm 132:4, 5.

- I.** The circumstances of the ark were now,
 - 1.** Better than what they had been. It had been obscure in a country town, in the fields of the wood; now it was removed to a public place, to the royal city, where all might resort to it. It had been neglected, as a despised broken vessel; now it was attended with veneration, and God was enquired of by it. It had borrowed a room in a private house, which it enjoyed by courtesy; now it had a habitation of its own entirely to itself, was set in the midst of it, and not crowded into a corner. Note, Though God's word and ordinances may be clouded and eclipsed for a time, they shall at length shine out of obscurity. Yet,
 - 2.** They were much short of what was intended in the next reign, when the temple was to be built. This was but a tent, a poor mean dwelling; yet this was the tabernacle, the temple which David in his psalms often speaks of with so much affection. David, who pitched a tent for the ark and continued steadfast to it, did far better than Solomon, who built a temple

for it and yet in his latter end turned his back upon it. The church's poorest times were its purest.

II. Now David was easy in his mind, the ark was fixed, and fixed near him. Now see how he takes care,

1. That God shall have the glory of it. Two ways he gives him honour upon this occasion: —

(1.) By sacrifices (v. 1), burnt-offerings in adoration of his perfections, peace-offerings in acknowledgment of his favours.

(2.) By songs: he appointed Levites to record this story in a song for the benefit of others, or to celebrate it themselves by *thanking and praising the God of Israel*, v. 4. All our rejoicings must express themselves in thanksgivings to him from whom all our comforts are received.

2. That the people shall have the joy of it. They shall fare the better for this day's solemnity; for he gives them all what is worth coming for, not only a royal treat in honour of the day (v. 3), in which David showed himself generous to his subjects, as he had found God gracious to him (those whose hearts are enlarged with holy joy should show it by being open-handed); but (which is far better) he gives them also a *blessing in the name of the Lord*, as a father, as a prophet, v. 2. He prayed to God for them, and commended them to his grace. *In the name of the Word of the Lord* (so the Targum), the essential eternal Word, who is Jehovah, and through whom all blessings come to us.

<BIB> 1 CHRONICLES 16:7-36

DAVID'S PSALM OF PRAISE

We have here the thanksgiving psalm which David, by the Spirit, composed, and delivered to the chief musician, to be sung upon occasion of the public entry the ark made into the tent prepared for it. Some think he appointed this hymn to be daily used in the temple service, as duly as the day came; whatever other psalms they sung, they must not omit this. David had penned many psalms before this, some in the time of his trouble by Saul. This was composed before, but was now first delivered into the hand of Asaph, for the use of the church. It is gathered out of several psalms

(from the beginning to v. 23 is taken from ^{}Psalm 105:1, etc.; and then v. 23 to v. 34 is the whole 96th psalm, with little variation; v. 34 is taken from ^{}Psalm 136:1 and divers others; and then the last two verses are taken from the close of Psalm 106), which some think warrants us to do likewise, and make up hymns out of David's psalms, a part of one and a part of another put together so as may be most proper to express and excite the devotion of Christians. These psalms will be best expounded in their proper places (if the Lord will); here we take them as they are put together, with a design to *thank the Lord* (v. 7), a great duty, to which we need to be excited and in which we need to be assisted.

1. Let God be glorified in our praises; let his honour be the centre in which all the lines meet. Let us glorify him by our thanksgivings (*Give thanks to the Lord*), by our prayers (*Call on his name*, v. 8), by our songs (*Sing psalms unto him*), by our discourse — *Talk of all his wondrous works*, v. 9. Let us glorify him as *a great God, and greatly to be praised* (v. 25), as supreme God (above all gods), as sole God, for all others are idols, v. 26. Let us glorify him as most bright and blessed in himself (*Glory and honour are in his presence*, v. 27), as creator (*The Lord made the heavens*), as the ruler of the whole creation (*His judgments are in all the earth*, v. 14), and as ours — *He is the Lord our God*. Thus must we *give unto the Lord the glory due to his name* (v. 28, 29), and own it, and much more, his due.

2. Let other be edified and instructed: *Make known his deeds among the people* (v. 8), *declare his glory among the heathen* (v. 24), that those who are strangers to him may be led into acquaintance with him, allegiance to him, and the adoration of him. Thus must we serve the interests of his kingdom among men, that all the earth may *fear before him*, v. 30.

3. Let us be ourselves encouraged to triumph and trust in God. Those that give glory to God's name are allowed to *glory in it* (v. 10), to value themselves upon their relation to God and venture themselves upon his promise to them. *Let the heart of those rejoice that seek the Lord*, much more of those that have found him. *Seek him, and his strength, and his face*: that is, seek him by the ark of his strength, in which he manifests himself.

4. Let the everlasting covenant be the great matter of our joy and praise (v. 15): *Be mindful of his covenant*. In the parallel place it is, *He will be ever mindful of it*, ^{}Psalm 105:8. Seeing God never will forget it, we never must. The covenant is said to be *commanded*, because God has obliged us

to obey the conditions of it, and because he has both authority to make the promise and ability to make it good. This covenant was ancient, yet never to be forgotten. It was made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were long since dead (v. 16-18), yet still sure to the spiritual seed, and the promises of it pleadable.

5. Let God's former mercies to his people of old, to our ancestors and our predecessors in profession, be commemorated by us now with thankfulness to his praise. Let it be remembered how God protected the patriarchs in their unsettled condition. When they came strangers to Canaan and were sojourners in it, when they were few and might easily have been swallowed up, when they were continually upon the remove and so exposed, when there were many that bore them ill-will and sought to do them mischief, yet no man was suffered to do them wrong — not the Canaanites, Philistines, Egyptians. Kings were reprov'd and plagued for their sakes. Pharaoh was so, and Abimelech. They were the *anointed of the Lord*, sanctified by his grace, sanctified by his glory, and had received the unction of the Spirit. They were his prophets, instructed in the things of God themselves and commissioned to instruct others (and prophets are said to be *anointed*, ~~11916~~ 1 Kings 19:16; ~~2600~~ Isaiah 61:1); therefore, if any touch them, they touch the apple of God's eye; if any harm them, it is at their peril, v. 19-22.

6. Let the great salvation of the Lord be especially the subject of our praises (v. 23): *Show forth from day to day his salvation*, that is (says bishop Patrick), his promised salvation by Christ. We have reason to celebrate that from day to day; for we daily receive the benefits of it, and it is a subject that can never be exhausted.

7. Let God be praised by a due and constant attendance upon him in the ordinances he has appointed: *Bring an offering*, then the fruit of the *ground*, now the fruit of the *lips*, of the *heart* (~~3835~~ Hebrews 13:15), and *worship him in the beauty of holiness*, in the holy places and in a holy manner, v. 29. Holiness is the beauty of the Lord, the beauty of all sanctified souls and all religious performances.

8. Let God's universal monarchy be the fear and joy of all people. Let us reverence it: *Fear before him, all the earth*. And let us rejoice in it: *Let the heavens be glad and rejoice*, because *the Lord reigns*, and by his providence establishes the world, so that, though it be moved, it cannot be removed, nor the measures broken which Infinite Wisdom has taken in the government of it, v. 30, 31.

9. Let the prospect of the judgment to come inspire us with an awful pleasure, Let earth and sea, fields and woods, though in the great day of the Lord they will all be consumed, yet rejoice that he will come, doth come, to *judge the earth*, v. 32, 33.

10. In the midst of our praises we must not forget to pray for the succour and relief of those saints and servants of God that are in distress (v. 35): *Save us, gather us, deliver us from the heathen*, those of us that are scattered and oppressed. When we are rejoicing in God's favours to us we must remember our afflicted brethren, and pray for their salvation and deliverance as our own. We are members one of another; and therefore when we mean, "Lord, save *them*," it is not improper to say, "Lord, save *us*." Lastly, Let us make God the Alpha and Omega of our praises. David begins with (v. 8), *Give thanks to the Lord*; he concludes (v. 36), *Blessed be the Lord*. And whereas in the place whence this doxology is taken (~~13468~~ Psalm 106:48) it is added, *Let all the people say, Amen, Hallelujah*, here we find they did according to that directory: *All the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord*. When the Levites had finished this psalm or prayer and praise, then, and not till then, the people that attended signified their consent and concurrence by saying, *Amen*, And so they praised the Lord, much affected no doubt with this newly instituted way of devotion, which had been hitherto used in the schools of the prophets only, ~~19115~~ 1 Samuel 10:5. And, if this way of praising God *please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that has horns and hoofs, the humble shall see it and be glad*, ~~14681~~ Psalm 69:31, 32.

~~13167~~ 1 CHRONICLES 16:37-43

THE SERVICE OF THE ARK

The worship of God is not only to be the work of a solemn day now and then, brought in to grace a triumph; but it ought to be the work of every day. David therefore settles it here for a constancy, puts it into a method, which he obliged those that officiated to observe in their respective posts. In the tabernacle of Moses, and afterwards in the temple of Solomon, the ark and the altar were together; but, ever since Eli's time, they had been separated, and still continued so till the temple was built. I cannot conceive what reason there was why David, who knew the law and was zealous for

it, did not either bring the ark to Gibeon, where the tabernacle and the altar were, or bring them to Mount Zion, where the ark was. Perhaps the curtains and hangings of Moses's tabernacle were so worn with time and weather that they were not fit to be removed, nor fit to be a shelter for the ark; and yet he would not make all new, but only a tent for the ark, because the time was at hand when the temple should be built. Whatever was the reason, all David's time they were asunder, but he took care that neither of them should be neglected.

1. At Jerusalem, where the ark was, Asaph and his brethren were appointed to attend, to *minister before the ark continually*, with songs of praise, *as every day's work required*, v. 37. No sacrifices were offered there, nor incense burnt, because the altars were not there: but David's prayers were *directed as incense, and the lifting up of his hands as the evening sacrifice* (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 141:2), so early did spiritual worship take place of ceremonial.

2. Yet the ceremonial worship, being of divine institution, must by no means be omitted; and therefore at Gibeon were the altars where the priests attended, for their work was to sacrifice and burn incense, which they did *continually, morning and evening, according to the law of Moses*, v. 39, 40. These must be kept up because, however in their own nature they were inferior to the moral services of prayer and praise, yet, as they were types of the mediation of Christ, they had a great deal of honour put upon them, and the observance of them was of great consequence. Here Zadok attended, to preside in the service of the altar; as (it is probable) Abiathar settled at Jerusalem, to attend the ark, because he had the breast-plate of judgment, which must be consulted before the ark: this is the reason why we read in David's time both Zadok and Abiathar were the priests (~~2 Samuel~~ 2 Samuel 8:17; 20:25), one where the altar was and the other where the ark was. At Gibeon, where the altars were, David also appointed *singers to give thanks to the Lord*, and the burden of all their songs must be, *For his mercy endureth for ever*, v. 41. They did it *with musical instruments of God*, such instruments as were appointed and appropriated to this service, not such as they used on other occasions. Between common mirth and holy joy there is a vast difference, and the limits and distances between them must be carefully observed and kept up. Matters being thus settled, and the affairs of religion put into a happy channel,

(1.) The people were satisfied, and went home pleased.

(2.) David returned to bless his house, resolving to keep up family worship still, which public worship must not supersede.