

The Tabernacle of David

Our reading in 1 Chronicles chapter 16 commences by describing how that the Ark of the Covenant was placed in a particular tabernacle that David had pitched for it:

“So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God” (1 Chron. 16:1, see also 2 Sam. 6:17).

It is evident that this is different to the Tabernacle of the Congregation that Moses constructed. We can see this from 2 Chronicles 1, where we read that the two tabernacles were in different places:

“So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was at Gibeon*; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of Yahweh had made in the wilderness. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim, to the place which David had prepared: for he had pitched a tent for it *at Jerusalem*” (2 Chron. 1:3-4).

Notice, then, that the Tabernacle of the Congregation was at Gibeon, whereas the tent that David had pitched was at Jerusalem. The Ark was not within the Tabernacle of the Congregation then, as it had been placed within the tent at Jerusalem. Accordingly, we read of the words of Yahweh to David: “... for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone *from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another*” (1 Chron. 17:5).

This new Tent, or Tabernacle, is referred to again in 1 Chronicles chapter 15, where the record informs us that it became an integral part of worship in the nation of Israel:

“And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent” (1 Chron. 15:1).

Today’s reading in the next chapter describes the new arrangement of worship. After speaking of how the Ark was positioned in the new Tent (verse 1), we read that:

“he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the Ark of Yahweh, and to record and **to thank and praise** Yahweh God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: and Jeiel with Psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals” (1 Chron. 16:4-6).

The Tabernacle that David pitched then, was to be a centre for praise and thanksgiving. Particular singers were appointed to lead the worship at that place, as described in this chapter. But it is interesting to note, that this new Tent was not a place for the offering up of animal sacrifices. Although sacrifices were used to consecrate the Tent, this was not the purpose of the Tent itself. So we read later in this chapter:

“So he left there before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the Ark continually, as every day’s work required ... and Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the Tabernacle of Yahweh in the high place that was at Gibeon, To offer burnt offerings unto Yahweh upon the Altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of Yahweh, which he commanded Israel” (1 Chron. 16:37).

Notice the point here: in David's tabernacle, there is no mention of an altar, which meant that sacrifices were not made there. It was specifically for the offering of praise and thanksgiving – which was outside of the Mosaic system of worship. There is a parallel here with our own circumstance: in our day, the Lord does not require animal sacrifices – they were fulfilled in the offering up of Messiah. But we do need to offer the sacrifice of our lips, praising and giving thanks to the One who has called us by His Grace. So we read in Hebrews chapter 13:

“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach ... By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice *of praise* to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips *giving thanks* to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. 13:13-16).

Again, notice the allusions to David's Tabernacle here: the required offerings are not animal sacrifices, but the “sacrifice of praise ... giving thanks” to His most glorious name. These offerings are not made under the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law, but outside of it. In this, way, David's tabernacle foreshadows how the way of salvation and acceptable worship would continue outside of the confines of the Law.

2 Samuel 6 records the ceremony of the Ark being brought into the Tabernacle of David:

“... so David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David with gladness ... and David danced before Yahweh with all his might: and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Yahweh with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet ...” (2 Sam. 6:12-15).

Here, David – the king – is said to be clothed “with a linen ephod”. Ordinarily, this was a priestly garment, but here the king is wearing it. It would not, we suggest, be stretching the point to say that here David was enacting a role of a king-priest, after the order of Melchisedec. In this, he foreshadows the position of Messiah as a king-priest,

From the beginning of the inauguration of David's Tabernacle, we see the joy and praise that was to take place there. Certain singers were selected to lead the praise:

“Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthan, who should prophesy with harps, with Psalteries, and with Cymbals .” (1 Chron. 25:1, see to verse 31).

The reference to the sons of Asaph is significant, for there are certain Psalms that bear this name: Psalms 50, 73 – 83. We shall briefly consider one of them: Psalm 50. This Psalm demonstrates that Yahweh does not have a need for the people to give him animal sacrifices: what He desires is rather thanksgiving – which, as we have seen, was the main feature of the Tabernacle of David. So we read:

“I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offering, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For ever beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? *Offer unto God thanksgiving*; and pay thy vows unto the most high ...” (Psa. 50:8-14).

What matters therefore, is not the mechanical process of the slaying of animals, but rejoicing from the heart, and giving thanks to the Almighty for His wonderful works to the children of men (see also Jer. 7:22-23).

Returning to the record in 1 Chronicles, we find that there were particular orders by which the singing priests were appointed. Chapter 24 describes “the divisions of the sons of Aaron”, who were to minister at the Tabernacle of the Congregation. There we find that there were two sub-divisions:

“Among the sons of Eleazar, there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar, according to the house of their fathers” (1 Chron 24:4).

$16 + 8 = 24$, hence there were 24 orders of priests, headed by 24 chief men.

Again, in chapter 25, we read of the order of Levites appointed to minister in the Tabernacle of David, as we saw earlier:

“Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthan, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries and cymbals, and the number of the workmen according to their service was ...”

And the record continues to give the detail of each order of singers, leading up to “the four and twentieth to Romanti-ezer ...” (see 1 Chron. 25:1-31). This is interesting: there were 24 orders of priests, and 24 orders of singers – each with chief men overseeing the work.

These two aspects are merged together in the Apocalyptic visions revealed to John in the isle of Patmos. There, in Revelation chapter 4, we read that encircling the Throne upon which the Lord Jesus Christ is seated, were 24 elders:

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats, I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Rev. 4:4).

And these elders were both priests and singers! We can see this from the next chapter:

“when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And **they sung a new song**, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings **and priests**; and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:8-10).

What we find then, is that when Messiah comes again to exercise his rule over the earth, part of the worship of that age to come, will echo the arrangement under the reign of his father David. This seems to be hinted at in the prophecy of Isaiah, who speaks of “... when Yahweh of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and **before his ancients** gloriously” (Isa. 24:23).

Again, the James cites a passage relating to the Tabernacle of David – and what it represents, applying it to the days of Messiah’s rule:

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out from them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written: After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the

Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:14-17).

In the kingdom to come, therefore, there will be a reinstatement of the 24 elder-priests to sing, praise, worship and give adoration to the Great King. Whilst it is clear that there will also be a reinstatement of animal offerings in the Kingdom (we show that [here](#)) there will also be a system of praise and worship established in Jerusalem, after the pattern of ancient days. Hence Isaiah also wrote: "... in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness" (Isa. 16:5).

Returning to our reading from 1 Chronicles chapter 16, we find that the central object of worship was to glorify the Name of Yahweh:

"... give unto Yahweh the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness ..." (1 Chron. 16:29).

This is a feature that is sadly lacking in many of the prayers of our contemporaries. So often the emphasis is on the individual who is praying: what they want, and what they need, and what help they desire in their daily lives. But our prayers must be more than a shopping list to the Almighty describing what we want from Him. They must focus on the glorification of Yahweh, And his Holy Name. Hence our Lord in giving his model prayer for the disciples to use, said: "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mat. 6:10). The Glorification of God should be paramount in the believer's mind, and that must manifest itself in our prayers to Him.

In the Age to Come, the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be exalted also. No longer will it be that his Name is used as a term of contempt by the unenlightened. In that day, it is written that:

" ... at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

How we long for those days to come! Those who love his appearing will appear with him with joy and great gladness. We hope to be part of that host of men and women who sing the praises of their God in the Age to Come, signing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. We must therefore order our worship aright in the few days that remain, so that we can continue to glorify our God, in the coming time when righteousness shall prevail. May that day soon come, when the Tabernacle of David will be restored!

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