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Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School - 2001

THE HOUSE OF ASAPH - FAMILY OF FAITH AND MASTERS OF MUSIC

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Study #3: The spirit of the house of Asaph

Thank you, brother chairman, and good morning, brethren and sisters.

You'll recall that in our study yesterday, we left the house of Asaph alone in front of the ark of God, where for 40 years they both sang before the ark and pondered its significance. You'll remember how they made that crucial leap of understanding, so they learned the lesson, they learned the secret of what it was, what it really did mean to enter into the presence of God in their worship of the Father.

Now it's in these years, these 40 years that they were by themselves, that we believe that Asaph collaborated with David, in establishing the whole system of temple worship that was going to follow with Solomon onwards, with the completion, with the complete building of the temple itself. In fact, what happened is that David and Asaph got together and they formed the principles by which the temple worship would be organized. That system of temple worship was based upon what we have come to know as the 24 courses. The whole process, the whole system of temple worship was based upon 24 orders; so here firstly in 1 Chronicles 23 we're told that there were Levites to oversee the work of the house of the LORD and there were 24,000 Levites that were divided into general courses, that that work of the house of God might be fulfilled.

But we're told in the next chapter in 1 Chronicles 24, that the priests who would execute the priestly office in the sanctuary were divided into 24 courses. In the next chapter, in chapter 25 we're told however, that also there would be 24 courses of singers who would give thanks and praise in the sanctuary. In the next chapter in chapter 26, we're told that there would be 24 courses of gate keepers who would guard the holiness of the sanctuary; and, in the next chapter, in 1 Chronicles chapter 27, we're told there would be captains to serve the king on all matters of business: 12 men, one for each month of the year, and each of those captains would command 24,000 who would serve under them. So, there was a whole system of worship here that was now organized by David in collaboration with Asaph. There was a matching together of the courses of the priests and the courses of the singers who cooperated together week by week in the temple services. So, as the priests burnt the incense so that the incense might ascend to the Father, so also at that very same moment of time, the singers sang

their praises. The prayers of the priests and the praises of the singers ascended heavenward together to God, as the courses cooperated together in these matters of worship. So now it has all been organized, you see!

If we come to 2 Chronicles chapter 5, we come to that moment of time now, when the celebration of the completion of the temple is marked by this marvellous moment of worship and celebration in the nation, that they might commemorate what they had done on that day. In 2 Chronicles chapter 5, we have in fact, the story of the day that the ark of God was taken, not to Zion but taken into the temple that Solomon had now built for it. We're told in the 11th verse, 'It came to pass when the priests were come out of the Holy Place, for all the priests that were present were sanctified and did not then wait by course'. You see, I think what we're being told in the 11th verse is that on the great day of celebration, all 24 courses of priests were involved together; not just the course set down for that week, they were all there on that day, says 2 Chronicles 5 verse 11. As with the priests so with the singers because the 12th verse tells us, 'also the Levites which were the singers, all of them'; and, I think the force of that phrase 'all of them' tells us that just as the 24 courses of priests were present (verse 11) so on this day, all 24 courses of singers were present. This was such a special moment, this was so important an event in the history of the nation, that they all came together on that particular day! Of course, you know what that meant in reality? what it really meant in the 12th verse was that on this occasion the sons of Heman and Jeduthun now joined the house of Asaph so together now, for the first time in 40 years, all three branches of the singers of the house of Levi came together on this day when the ark of God was brought into the temple.

You know, we're told in 1 Chronicles 23 verse 5, that there were actually 4,000 singers dedicated for the temple worship. 1 Chronicles 23 verse 5 tells us there were 4,000 singers and I think they were all there this day, b&s, every one of them. Can you imagine what this choir would have looked like on the occasion of this celebration? Now Asaph may or may not have been there; do you notice what verse 12 says? it doesn't say that Asaph was there, it says all of them of Asaph, because you see, this is now 40 years on from 1 Chronicles chapter 16. Now, depending on how old Asaph was when David selected him, he might now be dead, he might be very old. So, whether he was there or not, on this particular occasion we're not sure, but what we do know is that the house of Asaph are there, in fact, you'll notice that they're mentioned first. Verse 12 of 2 Chronicles 5 says, 'Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun'; so, who comes first? why the house of Asaph. You see, the fact that they sang before the ark for 40 years on their own, gives them now the primacy among the singers; the others join with the house of Asaph, but it's the house of Asaph that are going to lead the praise.

So here we have the assembled choir, all robed in white linen, standing with their backs to the altar, facing the entry of the temple. 4,000 singers and 120 trumpeters all with their eyes rivetted on one particular spot. The spot they were looking at, b&s, was the

gap between the two pillars Jachin and Boaz; they had their backs to the altar but their eyes fixed on the doorway into the temple. The chief musician was there, ready to lift his hand, so that the entire choir might break out into praise and celebration; and what they were waiting for was the moment when they saw the priests who had borne the ark into the Most Holy Place, come back out of that door. The moment they saw the priests coming back out of the door, to signify that the ark was now in the Holy Place, then the choir would begin their song of praise.

So verse 13 tells us, 'It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Yahweh'. Oh now, by the way, you should take a note of those two words, do you realize that those two words come from 1 Chronicles 16, 'to praise and to thank'. You see, back in 1 Chronicles 16 verse 5 it says, 'that David appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of Yahweh to thank and to praise the LORD God of Israel', and those two words become key words for this particular family. They would constantly be involved in matters of thanks and praise, and by the way, I think those two words are different and betoken different ideas. Thankfulness and praise are not the same thing. So, here's these same two key words again, now in 2 Chronicles 5 verse 13, and you see what it says, verse 13: 'and when they lifted up their voice with trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, they praised Yahweh, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever'. Now where do those words come from? and the margin is absolutely correct, for the margin says they come from, why! 1 Chronicles 16 and verse 34. You see, these words come from the family psalm of the house of Asaph which they've already been singing for the last 40 years. This is their psalm that they sang on this day, when the ark of God came into the temple! They thanked God for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever. The house of Asaph knew those words, b&s, back to front and inside out, they'd been singing them for a generation of time already.

You know, every little word in the bible's important! Just look at this, there's a couple of things, do you notice that part way through verse 11 that we've got brackets in the text. You'll notice that it says, 'It came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place', and then it starts a set of brackets and those brackets don't finish until the end of verse 12. So, firstly, just note those brackets, and now have a look at a key word in verse 13, it's about halfway down the verse, it says, 'they made one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; AND WHEN they lifted up their voice, WHEN they did this; and, then, later on in the verse it says, 'that THEN the house was filled with a cloud'. Now come back and look at verse 11. Now, and I'm going to read what really did happen on that day by jumping over the brackets, so here it is, 2 Chronicles 5 verse 11, 'It came to pass when the priests were come out of the Holy Place, verse 13, 'it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Yahweh; and when they lifted up their voice with trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music and praised Yahweh saying, For He is good, for His mercy endureth forever, THAT THEN the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Yahweh'.

Do you know what that verse is telling us, b&s? It's telling us that the action of the priests in physically bringing the ark into the Most Holy was not as significant as the action of the singers in mentally drawing near to God. It wasn't the priests bringing the ark into the sanctuary that drew down the divine glory of God's presence, it was the singers who sang their understanding of what the ark stood for with united hearts; it was the singers who believed that they had entered into the very presence of God; and, when the singers sang, b&s, we're told in this verse that God sealed His approval of their spirit, by the flashing majesty of the Shechinah glory and God was indeed enthroned upon the praises of His people that day. What a marvellous moment in time that must have been! We're told in verse 14, 'that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of Yahweh had filled the house of God'. Who lead the worship on this day, b&s? It was the singers, it was the house of Asaph, who knew more than anyone else in Israel what this ark really represented, and on that day, in their songs of praise, they lead the nation into the very presence of God and bowed before His majesty as the glory of the LORD filled the temple, on this occasion.

Now, because of a lack of time, I'm not going to go through the next few kings, but we're going to come straight from the time of Solomon here, to the time of Jehoshaphat. Now, in 2 Chronicles 20; in 2 Chronicles 20 we come now to the time of Jehoshaphat. Now what we've done is this, we've come from Solomon through the reign of Rehoboam, through the reign of Abijah, through the reign of Asa, and now we've come to Jehoshaphat who's the next king. But if we want to know the setting of the time, the details are as follows: that 2 Chronicles 20 is approximately BC 860 which is 100 years after 2 Chronicles 5; so, we've now moved on a 100 years in time, from the moment of the dedication of the temple. Well, what happens in 2 Chronicles 20? We're told in the first verse, 'It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle'. So, here now, in the midst of Jehoshaphat's reign, he faced a crisis. The nation of Judah was attacked by a large confederacy and they lay in great danger, and as a result of that, we're told in the 3rd verse, 'that Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek Yahweh, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah'. He stands up in the 5th verse before the congregation in order that he might offer a prayer on behalf of the nation, and do you know that when this king stood up and opened his mouth that he might pray to God, out of the mouth of this king came the very spirit, b&s, of the house of Asaph. Now let's just see what Jehoshaphat prayed. We're told in the 6th verse that he said this, 'O Yahweh Elohim of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee? Art not Thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built Thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto Thee in our affliction, then Thou

wilt hear and help'.

You see, here is a man, b&s, who understands the supremacy of God. Can you see that spirit in the prayer of Jehoshaphat? Everything he says is concerning the majesty and the supremacy of God. Of course, in the 9th verse, he refers to the great prayer of Solomon himself at the time of the dedication of the temple. He claims to be standing there in the very presence of God as he pleads for the divine help; and, you see, he does the right thing, does Jehoshaphat, because look what he says in the 11th verse, 'behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee'. So you see, what Jehoshaphat does here is that he pleads the help of God, for the honour of God's own integrity; he says, 'look, we do not know what to do, this is Thy possession, this is Thy people, this is Thy name, wilt Thou not help, O God?'

Oh, it was a marvellous prayer, because he placed the whole thing in the lap of the Father and sought that the Father might act, not for the deliverance of the people specifically, but for the honour and vindication of God's own name. You see, here was a man who understood the spirit of the supremacy of God, who came before the presence of God in his prayers. So we ought not to be surprised then, given the spirit of Jehoshaphat's prayer, that the record of this chapter goes on to tell us in the 14th verse, 'Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of Yahweh in the midst of the congregation'; and, we believe that Jahaziel, the man of this verse, the man of the sons of Asaph, was moved by the spirit of the prayer of Jehoshaphat which captured the very spirit of the house of Asaph. The Spirit of God moved mightily upon a man of Asaph and he stood up and encouraged the nation with the assurance of divine victory. In fact, what he says is this, in verse 17, 'Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of Yahweh with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: FOR YAHWEH WILL BE WITH YOU'. So here now is the assurance of the divine presence, from a man of Asaph, on behalf of all the nation. 'And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell ('paniym' - 6440) in the presence of Yahweh, worshipping Him'.

So here now, was a marvellous answer to the prayer of Jehoshaphat in this particular time of crisis! Well, we're told that this is what happened., verse 20, 'They rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in Yahweh your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD'; now, in the AV we should get the idea from verse 21 that he appointed the singers after he had consulted with the people; but, I think if we look at another couple

of translations, that is not so! The decision of verse 21 was Jehoshaphat's alone. Rotherham says 'and when he had given counsel unto the people, he appointed such as should sing unto Yahweh'. Or the Jerusalem bible which says, 'then having held a conference with the people, he set the cantors of Yahweh in sacred vestments, at the head of the army'. So, you see, I think Jehoshaphat firstly comforted the people and then he made the decision that he would send singers in front of the army. Now, this was a remarkable thing for the king to do, when you think about it! Fancy sending a choir at the front of an army! what an amazing thing to do, the most unusual foreman of warfare; and do you see what it says? In verse 21, it says, 'When he consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto Yahweh, that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army', (and this is what they sang) 'they sang, Praise Yahweh, for His mercy endureth for ever'. Oh, now, where do those words come from, b&s? why! surprise, surprise, they come from 1 Chronicles 16 verse 34, so guess who might have been the singers on that occasion who went forth at the head of the army? but the house of Asaph. Who told them to sing those words on that day, b&s? These were the words of the family psalm of the house of Asaph, and they went forth and marched forth with absolute conviction that the presence of God was with them! It was as if they bore the ark in their midst, as they went forth on this occasion.

I'll tell you how appropriate it was! if you'll just hold your hands there and come back to 1 Chronicles 16, just see how marvellously appropriate it was that they should sing their family song on this occasion as they went at the front of the army. We're told this in verse 34 (which is what they were singing), 'O give thanks unto Yahweh; for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, SO THAT we may give thanks to thy holy name'. Oh, what a psalm they should sing as they went forth in front of the army on this occasion. Do you know what happened in 2 Chronicles 20, b&s? Come and look. It's absolutely remarkable! this is what actually happened. In 2 Chronicles 20 we're told this, we're told they marched forth with the singers at the front. Verse 24 says, 'When Judah came toward the watchtower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies'. So what happened is, that the whole army marched forth with the choir at the start, the choir began to sing and the house of Asaph marched along, and they sang their songs, and they sang all the way until they came to the battle ground; and when they came to the battle ground, the choir stopped, they looked out and everyone was already dead. What sort of music is this? that vanquishes an army? and you see, notice again the force of the Word in verse 22, it says, 'and when they began to sing, that at that time, Yahweh set the ambushments', so when their spirit was right, God moved on their behalf. Oh, you've never seen a choir like this one, b&s, singing this particular song on this day; and you know, at that particular time, we believe that one of the psalms of the house of Asaph was written.

Now, just hold your hand in 2 Chronicles 20 and come and have a look again at Psalm 83, because you see, this psalm of the house of Asaph, we believe, was written at this very moment of time. I want to just show you how marvellously the prayer of the house

of Asaph was answered on this occasion. In Psalm 83 which we've already briefly looked at, a psalm that was written to commemorate that time when the children of Lot gathered together a confederacy against Israel, look at the prayer of the house of Asaph; psalm 83, reading verse 15: 'So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame; SO THAT they may seek thy name, O Yahweh. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: SO THAT men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Yahweh art the Most High over all the earth'. You see the spirit of the sons of Asaph, b&s,;they pray not for the deliverance of the nation merely, but that in the deliverance of the nation all those about might know that Yahweh He is God and that He is the Most High over all the earth. Remember the spirit of our prayers, that if we truly understand God manifestation, we will pray not for things for ourselves, but that whatever might happen to us, should be for the furtherance of the divine purpose. This family knew that principle, that's how they prayed!

Now, hold your hand in Psalm 83 and come back to 2 Chronicles 20 and just see how marvellously that prayer was answered on this occasion, because we're told this in the 27th verse, 'Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for Yahweh had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of Yahweh' Oh, I think the singers were singing again; you see, here are the musical instruments and here were the singers, they sang on their way home, just as they sang on the way out. Verse 29 says, 'And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that Yahweh fought against the enemies of Israel'. And the prayer of the house of Asaph had been, 'let them be confounded that men may know that Thou whose name is Yahweh, art the Most High over all the earth'. And when the sons of Asaph put voice in the prayer of psalm 83 that day, b&s, I think that psalm was brought forth on that very day, God mightily answered them, and they won a signal victory over their enemies, by the power of the singers! A marvellous, marvellous lesson, that it was!

Now, you'll remember, b&s, that at the start of these sessions, we made the point that there were 5 key things that the house of Asaph looked at in terms of music of praise. Now, you'll remember that we've already looked at this one, the matter of the fact that their hymns focussed on the supremacy of God. We also looked at this one here which is the fact that their hymns focussed also on the preeminence of principle, that their music was not based on emotion so much as intellect which then became a motive. Well, we're going to look this morning by way of summary, at this one here, which is the principle of solemnity of worship, that the music of the house of Asaph showed a reverence for the divine majesty and, therefore, for the solemnity that ought to be present in our songs of worship.

If you come back to 2 Chronicles 7, which takes us back to that day when they sang that song at the time that the ark of God was brought into the house of God, just look at

the spirit of what the nation felt like on that day, verses 1 to 3: 'Now when Solomon had made an end of praying the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Yahweh filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of Yahweh, because the glory of Yahweh had filled Yahweh's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of Yahweh upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised Yahweh saying, (why?) For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever'. Now, do you think that on that day, b&s, when they sang their songs and they saw that glory filling the house, that they would have been anything other than highly reverential in their songs?

In 2 Chronicles 29 we are told these words in the 30th verse, in the days of Hezekiah: 'Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto Yahweh with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped'. You know, when it says there that 'they bowed their heads' I think that's a reference to the singers, that they sang their songs and bowed their heads; you see, they were so overcome with the thought of ascribing praise to the Deity, that they bowed their heads in the very moment of offering praise to the Father. They were in awe of the majesty of the God that they worshipped.

You know, b&s, secular music was different to sacred music in biblical times. The sacred instruments that David used, and that he organized for this system of temple worship, were different to other instruments. They were separated out, they became special and unique and they were only found in the system of temple worship. There were only 4 instruments that were used in the temple order of song; and, the 4 instruments used were: the cymbal, the psaltery, the harp and the trumpet. They are the only 4 instruments that were associated with the whole system of temple song and temple praise. Almost as if David made these to be special and different instruments, that when they are associated with sacred music as opposed to other forms of music. Of course, the bible tells us of a number of other musical instruments, doesn't it? The bible mentions the dulcimer and the timbrel and the sackbut and the drum and the tabret and the cornet and the pipe and the organ and the viol and there are a few other musical instruments, but none of those were used in the temple system of things. There has been a suggestion made, and I think it's quite a good one, it's that, perhaps these were withheld because of their associations with pagan music, because these were the instruments used by the surrounding nations in their heathen worship, but they were not to be used or associated with the music of the worship of God; so, they were never found in the temple system of things. But the instruments that were used were holy and spiritual; and, so they were obviously appropriate to convey the range of emotions that are needed in our songs of praise to the Father.

Our singing, b&s, does have a whole range of things that we might wish to convey: majesty, mercy, grandeur, goodness, dignity, pathos, contentment, peace, sadness,

love, sternness, joy, happiness, reverence, compassion, sorrow, thanksgiving, and a tremendous range of emotions, isn't there? That's to be captured in our own songs of worship and praise, just as it was in Israel of the past; but, the key to this is, b&s, that the music that we use and the songs of praise that we have, although they convey all of those emotions and lift them up to the Father, here is the key lesson for today's session and study: the story or lesson is this, that we can be solemn and yet joyful, that one can exalt with praise but still be reverent; and, you see, I think that the house of Asaph always had a sense of dignity and reverence as they went about their songs of praise. They bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before Almighty God. There was nothing familiar in what they did!

Now this is a benchmark to test ourselves against in terms of the music that we might have. Here's another example of a piece of music that is actually a piece of Christian music again and it's on the subject of the Atonement. You can almost tell without me telling you anything about the music, what the music might be like. Just read the words!

O happy day
 O happy day, yeah
 When Jesus washed
 When Jesus washed
 When Jesus washed
 Washed my sins away
 O happy day
 La la la la la la la la

He taught me how
 To walk, to fight and pray
 He taught me how to live
 Yes He did, O yeah
 Every day.

Somehow you just know, b&s, before you've even heard that piece, that there is something not very dignified about it, for the God whom we worship.

When you come to the music of the truth, b&s, you'll find that there are two things about them: firstly is that the music of the truth seems to have a strong connection with scripture, just in case you haven't noticed, and one of the most marvellous things about our hymn book and the hymns that we sing, is that when we sing we ought to think, oh, that's 1 Timothy, oh that's Psalm 89, oh this is Psalm 96, and all of these scriptural thoughts come flooding into our mind because the very best of our hymns capture all sorts of spiritual ideas from the Word of God. When to those spiritual thoughts we add the appropriate music that is dignified and solemn, I feel my heart exalted with praise and I feel joyful, but never at the expense of reverence for God. Somehow we've got to find a balance here, don't we? in terms of that which we should aspire to in our songs of

praise and songs of worship. So, here are some tests then concerning the matter of the solemnity of worship.

Here's two or three questions that we might ask that will help us to test music that we might think about using! Here's the first question: Is the focus of the piece on the music or the words? that's the first question! If the focus is on the music then the trend is bad. Here's the second question: Are the thoughts consistent with our understanding of the truth? does it preserve our heritage of the faith? If it doesn't, then we should beware! The third question is: 'Does the music really help to fit the words to their proper heights? or does the music begin to undermine the truth of the words? Is the music modelled on modern secular sound or modern secular rhythms? if it is, then we should probably avoid it because David put difference between sacred and secular music and said they're not the same. We don't want the same sounds, we don't want the same rhythms, we don't want the same associations.

You see, one of the problems, b&s, I can't tell you exactly where the line or the limit is, because you know, even the same piece can be sung in different ways, depending on the attitude of the singer. Perhaps if I give you an example, if you'll spare me! So I apologize for this rendition, and I'm not going to use the words, I'm simply going to use the sounds but I hope the most of you will be familiar with this piece. You see, you can sing a piece in two different ways (he sings a short lyric in two different ways) and all of a sudden it's a different piece; so, you see, even the same piece can sound different depending on, well, what's our attitude here? what's our spirit? But, you see, the principle is this, that we want to avoid that which is frivolous or foolish, we want to avoid that which is familiar or casual, we want to avoid that which is flippant or showy; you know, in modern Christian music, b&s, God is the bloke next door, and Christ is our boy friend, that's what it sounds like; that's not the God whom we worship, b&s, and it's not the God whom the house of Asaph worshipped.

So here's the golden rule, as best that I can give it, without being able to give you anything more definitive. I think the golden rule is simply this, as the beat increases, reverence declines. Somewhere on a line of continuum, those two things will cross over and all of a sudden, a piece won't be right. You must judge for yourself, but I think that when the house of Asaph sang their song on that day when the temple was opened to receive the ark of God's presence and the glory of God filled the house, that they wouldn't have dreamed of do anything other than singing with the greatest of solemnity before Almighty God on that day.

So here it is, let's just take our closing summary. After the first disastrous attempt to convey the ark to Jerusalem, all Israel knew the power of Him that dwelleth between the cherubim. By the flashing forth of the divine majesty in judgment, Yahweh signified that mere feeling and enthusiasm in music were not enough. Divine principles must be upheld, and the majesty of His holiness honoured.(1 Chronicles 13 verses 6 to 12)

Even the splendour of the divine glory in approval was such an awe inspiring sight that the entire congregation were prostrated to the ground in humility (2 Chronicles 5 verse 13+14; 7 verse 3).

Likewise, the singers themselves sang praises with the greatest reverence, worshipping with bowed heads (2 Chronicles 29 verse 30).

The house of Asaph stood in awe of the divine presence (Psalm 50 verse 2+3; 76 verse 2; 80 verses 1+16). That which was familiar or casual, flippant or catchy, was to be eschewed.

Their music, however joyful, was never at the expense of the reverence, solemnity and dignity appropriate in praising God (Psalm 99 verse 1+3).

In the words of Psalm 99, b&s, and verse 1: 'That this is the God who reigneth, who dwelleth between the cherubim; let all the earth fear before Him'.