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Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School - 2001

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

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study #6: The Secret of the House of Asaph

Well, thank you again, brother chairman, and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, as they say, all stories have an end, so this morning we also come to the end of the story concerning the house of Asaph and their remarkable contribution to the spiritual fibre and the strength of the nation of Israel for such a long period of time in their history.

You'll remember that our previous study left the sons of Asaph on that barren hill of Moriah, singing with all their heart over a few stones that had been laid in that place; and, although there was no temple there, just a beginning of a new order of things, they still sang with the same fervour that their family had sung so long before at the dedication of Solomon's magnificent temple in earlier days. They knew their courses, they knew their words, they knew their instruments, they knew their songs. The year was BC 535 and this was some 85 years after Josiah's great Passover, but 460 years after David had first given to the family, the great psalm that they would sing all the days of their life, in 1 Chronicles 16. You'll remember, therefore, in that study we learned to appreciate the virtue of constancy that this family stood for; that they truly believed that the truths they sang were eternal things, that there was no change ever needed to them, so they used the same instruments, to sing the same words, to the same tune from the same hymn book for over 500 years.

Well, b&s, this morning we come to the next stage of the story of this family. That stage is found for us in Nehemiah chapter 12. In the book of Nehemiah you'll recall that in the days of Nehemiah he successfully built the walls all around the city of Jerusalem, that the city might be protected. We're told at the time of the accomplishment of that building, that there was a great celebration upon the walls themselves. This is what we're told in Nehemiah chapter 12 verse 27, 'At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps'. So, you see, only the sacred instruments were used, they'd never been changed, had they? b&s, these were the same things that were ordained as the instruments of God from the very days of David. There is no other instruments that have ever been added to the matters of worship in Israel's history, from the time of

David to this time now, in Nehemiah. The singers are still there but the instruments are unchanged and verse 28 says, 'The sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem and from the villages of Netophathi. Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: FOR' (and we oughtn't to be surprised at this) 'for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem'. Well, we wouldn't be surprised at that, would we, b&s? that of all the places in the land that the singers would want to live, and where they were they'd want to build their villages, they wanted to be clustered around Jerusalem, the centre of God's presence in Israel, the place where the ark would be kept. That was always the heart and soul of this particular family, so out of the villages they now come that they might celebrate the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.

We're told this in the 35th verse, it says, 'Certain of the priests' sons with trumpets; namely, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph; And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Mialai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe'. So, here is a descendant of Asaph now found again leading the matters of worship, even in the days of Nehemiah, and with him, and with his brethren, are those musical instruments, and do you see how they are described in this verse? The musical instruments of David the man of God. I think we can probably reasonably assume that the force of this expression is that they are the very same instruments! That the house of Asaph had preserved these very instruments all during the Babylonian captivity, and it's those ancient instruments that have now been brought back to be used in the songs of worship here, at the dedication of the wall! The very ones that David himself had made. By the way, I think they were made under divine inspiration. I think that just as David received the pattern of all the things that would go into the temple service, that amongst the patterns that David received by inspiration was the pattern of the instruments themselves. So, once they'd been made by David, this house treasured them for all time. Now, here they are again, being played on the wall.

You know, it would really pluck at your heart strings, wouldn't it? b&s, to be standing on that wall on that day with that family and to hear those instruments being played again! We're told in verse 40 that the two companies of them that stood gave thanks in the house of God, and verse 42 says 'the singers sang loud'. So they always had, b&s, because they sang from the bottom of their hearts, this family. Verse 45 says, 'Both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son. FOR IN THE DAYS OF DAVID AND ASAPH OF OLD, there was a chief of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God'. I think what verse 46 is telling us, is that just as there was a chief musician in the days of David, who was, of course, Asaph himself, so now even in the days of Nehemiah, just as there was in the days of old, there was still a chief of the singers, and songs of (oh, by the way, did you notice the two key words there in verse 46 again) 'songs of praise and thanksgiving' those two key words from 1 Chronicles 16. So, here they are! You see, there's no change to the spirit

of this house. Marvellous! They had always sung before the ark of God and here they are still singing with the same fervour in the days of Nehemiah.

Do you know what's really interesting about this verse in Nehemiah chapter 12? THERE IS NO ARK, b&s. The ark of God is gone! There is no priest with Urim and Thummim, there is no Shechinah glory, and do you think that changed the fervency of this house in terms of their songs? not one bit! You see, they had long since transcended the idea of the physical ark and they drew close to God in song, even though the token of His presence was no longer there, they still sang the same songs. They still came into the presence of the Father when they sang those songs, even though the ark of His presence has now disappeared for good from the record of Israel. Do you know, this episode in Nehemiah chapter 12 occurs in BC 445, that's 90 years after Ezra chapter 3 and the laying of the foundation of the temple. This is about another 3 generations of this family after the days of Ezra 3, when they sang to celebrate the laying of those stones on Mount Moriah. Will this family never ever give up? They were truly, b&s, weren't they? in every respect as we've seen, a family of faith!

They were there in the days of David when he first set the ark in Zion and commanded this family that they sing to celebrate the real significance of that ark in the presence of Israel.

They were there at the time of the great celebration, the great dedication of the temple in the days of Solomon, and you'll remember that so wondrous was the singing of the house of Asaph on that occasion, that it was the songs of the singers that drew down the glory of the divine presence so that the glory of God might fill the house.

They were there in the days of Jehoshaphat marching at the head of the army and singing with such fervour that Almighty God acted on their behalf and a wondrous victory was won that day on behalf of the nation, so there enemies were destroyed yet not a man in Israel was lost.

They were there at the time of the revival of Jehoiada when he set Joash the boy king upon the throne of David and launched a special reformation in Israel in Judah, and at that time, the sons of Asaph the leaders of the singers were present to witness that coronation and to sing their praises.

They were there when Hezekiah launched his revival in the nation, and when in the space of just two weeks, he brought them all together, and asked them to sing perfectly in that great celebration of 2 Chronicles 29.

They were there when Josiah reformed the nation and asked the Levites to bring the ark back and put it into the temple, into the house of God from whence they had spirited it away.

They were there in the time of Ezra, at the laying of the foundation of a new temple, as they stood upon the barren hill of Zion and sang their songs to God.

They're here in the days of Nehemiah as the wall is built again! is there ever a family like this? They were truly a family of faith in every sense of the word, there was no family, b&s, I believe, that compares with the fervency and the dedication of this particular family in Israel.

Not only were they a family of faith, but as we've seen in the course of these studies, they were truly masters of music in Israel. Not simply because of their musical excellence, but because of the five key things that they held as the benchmark of their singing and from which they never deviated, because:

- they constantly celebrated the supremacy of God;
- they made sure that all their music had the appropriate solemnity of worship;
- they constantly maintained the preeminence of principle in all that they sang;
- they stood for the excellence of endeavour in all of their music; and,
- they established the virtue of constancy in Israel like no other family as they sang the same hymns with unswerving devotion.

Those 5 key principles that they established, if we could only use those as the benchmark for our songs of worship to the Father, then I believe, b&s, that whatever music we might choose, as long as it measures up to these five key principles, then we will have a basis for acceptable worship in song to the Father, even in our own day and generation. How thankful we can be to this family, that even though we have never received one single note of what they sang, we know their spirit! we know their mind, we know their attitude!

Now their appointment in the days of David was approximately BC 995; by the time we get to Nehemiah chapter 12, we've come to BC 445; and, therefore, we've traced this one family from 1 Chronicles 16 to Nehemiah 12 and we covered 550 years of continuous history with just one family. Do you know, that in the year 1481 AD, in Spain, the inquisition was renewed under a villainous man known as Torquemada, and around about that same time, in fact, in the year 1485, in England, was the great battle of Bosworth, and Henry VII defeated Richard III (Richard Plantagenet) and as a result of that battle he founded the house of Tudor that would become famous in English history. Just before that, in the year 1483 in France, the reign of Louis XI had come to an end, and Charles VIII ascended the throne and began his Italian wars. In 1448 AD, in Denmark, Christian I became elected and he became the Duke of Schleswig and Holstein and thereby united two of the greatest dynasties together. In the year 1440 AD, in Germany, Frederick III became regent and he was the man who would lay the foundations for the power of the Hapsburg family. Now, you're probably thinking, now why are we listening to history around about 1450 AD? Well, the answer is that that's how far back in our time we would have to go to begin the house of Asaph, and take it through to our time now. From 1450 AD this family was faithful through to our time, can you imagine that? Can you imagine any family that could have been faithful for that long? for that many years? for that many centuries? Well, this one was!

You know, in the book of Maccabees, there's an interesting reference to the days of Judas Maccabeus and it refers to one of the great battles that he fought on behalf of Israel. Of course, we know that the book of Maccabees are apocryphal books and although we don't take them as part of the inspired record of scripture, there is nothing to say that they are inadequate as historical records, just as we would take Josephus as

a historical record. Well, in the book of Maccabees we have this story of one of the great battles. I'll just draw your attention to some interesting words in this particular record, might look at the bottom piece first. It says,

'Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month they rose up betimes in the morning, and offered sacrifice according to the Law upon the new altar and they burnt burnt offerings, which they had made. According to the time, and according to the day wherein the heathen had defiled it, in the same was it dedicated with songs, and harps and lutes and cymbals. Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshipping and praising the God of heaven who had given them good success'. 1 Maccabees 4, vs.52-55.

And we're told, in the days of Judas Maccabeus there was an outpouring of praise to the Father, and the particular instruments that were used, were, why! harps and lutes (which are psalteries) and cymbals. Now, they are the very instruments that were known from the days of David as belonging to that system of things that the house of Asaph stood for, and in this same reference in the book of Maccabees we're told this, it says,

'Then Judas returned to spoil the tents, wherein they got much riches. After this they went home and sung a song of thanksgiving' (and this is what they sang), 'they praised the Lord in heaven: because He is good, because His mercy endureth forever. Thus Israel had a great deliverance that day'. 1 Maccabees 4 vs.23-25.

Now, I wonder who might have lead that song of singing, b&s, in the days of Judas Maccabeus? What we do know, of course, is that those words are the ancient family psalm of the house of Asaph. Now, I don't know, b&s, we can't say with absolute certainty, what we do know is that on that day someone sang that song in Israel with the right instruments. What's interesting is that is BC 160, that's 285 years after Nehemiah 12. We just don't know exactly how long this family may have gone on for, but what we do know is that this family had obviously discovered certain principles for their life and for their family life, that was so unique and so special as to cause them to maintain their spirit of faith before God for such a remarkable period of time.

So, I suppose, really, that the burden of our study this morning then, is to say, having looked at them for the last few days, what was the secret? So how did they do this? because if we could just unlock the secret of this family then we might discover the secret that we could translate into building such tremendous families for the truth today. So what was it that this family knew that others didn't know or that we've never understood? Well then, here's the secret of the house of Asaph, let's take it a step at a time!

1. I think the first thing was that this family was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of God manifestation. They really understood that principle. That's what 1 Chronicles 16 had taught them; this is the central issue of the truth, this is the core purpose of any ecclesia, of any family, of any individual. Remember the 'so that' test for our prayers.

Whatever we pray for, is it couched in accordance with the idea that it might be 'so that' the Father's purpose may be advanced in whatever we have prayed for. Now you know what's interesting of the doctrine of God manifestation? How do we teach this doctrine to our children? and the answer is, that we don't teach it by what we say, we teach it by what we do. Our children, unfortunately, for better or for worse, will copy what we do, not what we say. If we want our children to be passionately convinced as to the truth and the wonder and the beauty of God manifestation, as the central issue of the truth itself, well, they will learn that from our lives, b&s. So that's our responsibility as parents, is to teach this in what we do! (1 Chronicles 16 verses 8 to 35)

2. I think the second thing about this family was that they were deeply conscious of the majesty of the divine presence. All their lives they had lived in the sense of being with God and in God's presence, they had learned to ascend into the presence of God wherever they were; you see, I think that this family had learned the principles of focus and concentration. Our singing needs to capture that same spirit, and you can tell, b&s, when a hymn is being sung in the ecclesia, when the people are really focused on the words, when they are concentrating on what they are singing to the Father as an offering of praise and thanksgiving, well, this family had learnt how to do that. When they sang, they were so focused that they felt they as if they had come into the presence of God Himself. It's something we need to work at, it's something we need to develop; we need to unlock the power of our hymns by discovering their scriptural background. I think one of the very best things that ecclesias can do, is to spend time in that area. One of the things that we've done in our meeting from time to time, is that after bible class we will deal with a hymn that is new as far as the ecclesia is concerned which we've never sung; there will be plenty of opportunity for this if, God willing, the new hymn book is launched in due course, according to the schedule that it's currently running on, there will be lots of hymns to learn. But I think a very good way of learning them, is to have a brother who first will set aside 10 minutes of time to thrill the ecclesia with the scriptural background to that hymn, that makes it come alive, and then you learn it; I think by that means we revive the power of our hymns, including by the way, many splendid old ones that maybe we've really never investigated to the depths of what we should do. (Psalm 73 verses 23 and 24; 76 verse 7; 77 verse 13; 80 verse 1).

3. You see, this family understood this principle. They were deeply committed to the standard of excellence of endeavour. They practiced under the watchful eye of father Asaph; and remember this, b&s, that the spirit of endeavour isn't just the singing our hymns of praise, is it? It's the whole attitude of how we live our life in the truth; it relates to everything we do in ecclesial life and in family life, that whatever we do, we should do to the very best of our ability. Now the Father knows our varying levels of ability. The Father knows that some of us will bring forth 30 fold and some 60 and some 100; we need not worry about the fact that our abilities may vary, what the Father does want from us though is that spirit of excellence of endeavour, to at least the capability that we have in the truth. Well, this family knew that, they practiced that spirit of endeavour every day, only the very best was good enough for them, as their offering of praise to the Father. (1 Chronicles 25 verses 6 and 7)

4. This family was involved in the principle of thanks and praise to God, every single day of their lives. They were involved in this as the scriptures tell us. In fact, I've got another overhead here that just sort of says that! There was a whole series of passages here that tell us this daily involvement of the house of Asaph: in 1 Chronicles 16:37 it says, 'So he left there Asaph and his brethren to minister before the ark continually as every day's work required. Then again in Nehemiah 11:22+23 we're told, 'Of the sons of Asaph the singers, were over the business of the house of God, for it was the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due every day'. And if we were to ask, 'well, why was it that the portion should be due every day?' it was because this family had responsibilities every day to sing before the Father. In 1 Chronicles 9:33 it says, 'And these are the singers chief of the fathers of the Levites, who remaining in the chambers, were free for they were employed in that work, (that is, the work of singing) day and night', and 1 Chronicles 23:27-30 says, 'For by the last words of David, the Levites were numbered from 20 years old and above because their office was to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even'. So, every morning and every night did this family sing their praise to Almighty God on behalf of the nation continually, and yet, of course, it was an expression of their own conviction concerning those matters of praise to the Father. So, they were involved in the principle of thanks and praise every day of their life. Now that's a good thing to think about, isn't it?

You know, we say that we ought to give daily prayer a focus in our lives, and as families we endeavour to have daily readings, so maybe it's a good idea at the time of our daily readings is to have a daily hymn together. Imagine every family of the ecclesia at night time having a hymn with their family as they did the daily readings, so that every day they have learned the spirit of singing to God, of singing praise to the Father, so much so that it's become a daily habit in life. Well, that's what this family did! and I'm sure that that was part of the secret to this family's faithfulness, is that every day they sang those songs. Every day they understood those principles. (1 Chronicles 9:33; 23:30)

5. You see, this family was influenced by godly music to the heights of spiritual exaltation. You see, not only did this family sing the songs of praise everyday, b&s, but this family didn't know any other music. They knew nothing else but the songs of the LORD. You know, we should never ever underestimate the power of music! So I say to parents, parents, if you want to keep your children in the truth, guard their tastes in music. Some of you may have heard this, I've mentioned it to a couple of families, but in the house of Lewis every child at the age of 13, has received a CD player in their bedroom; they received that as a result of the love and kindness and the overflowing generosity of their father! There's only one catch, father chooses all the CD's in the home, and nought else is allowed. We did that, b&s, because we wanted first of all, to establish our children's taste in music from the very earliest stage, to give them that which we considered to be according to the standard of excellence. Now by the way, there's a whole range of secular music and I perfectly appreciate that tastes differ; you

might be surprised at the range of music you would hear even in the house of Lewis. But the point is, that we want to be able to control that process, and of greatest importance of all is this, that what we didn't want was any music or singing or any songs in our house, that might subvert or undermine or be detrimental to the godly atmosphere of our home, because we want our home to be a sanctuary for spiritual things and we won't have any music in our house that will in any way cut across that principle. We also want the music of our home to be compatible with the music of the truth. We never wanted our children to learn music and to develop a taste for music or the sort of music that would cause them to have a distaste for the hymns of Sunday morning. That whatever music we have in the home, that is as thoroughly compatible with the music we sing to the Father so they find that both are harmonious together and they never develop a distaste or a dislike of the hymns that we sing. So, if you don't know what your children are listening to, then you better find out! because music is one of the greatest powers for either spiritual good, or for spiritual evil. You know, in some places, and I've even had it happen myself, (not in this country but in another place), I was taken after the memorial meeting to be taken to a brother and sister's place for the afternoon meal, and I was driven there by a young brother, you see, after the meeting. We hopped into the car, and no sooner had the ignition turned on, than one was assailed by a monstrous beat and even more monstrous lyrics, which pounded us to death all the route to this family's place, where we were going to have lunch. The young brother was oblivious, in fact, of what had happened, but what I can tell you is this, in less than five minutes, any spiritual benefit from that meeting, was utterly wiped out! I wonder how many cars drive away from ecclesial meetings with that sort of music playing?

You know, they've done some studies which have showed with reasonable mathematical certainty, that the music you develop a taste for during the years 15 to 25, will continue to have the greatest emotional affect on you, for the rest of your life! You will never escape the pull of that music if you play it; of course, you don't have to play it later on, but if you do, you'll immediately feel the pulling of your emotions towards that music. Whatever you develop a taste for in those years of life, will affect you the greatest. That's not to say that you can't develop new tastes, not to say that you can't develop new musical tastes, because I believe that you can, with courage and commitment, but we need to appreciate therefore, the power of what we're doing with and for our children, that those are the vital years. If they develop a taste for the right things then, they will have that taste for the rest of their life. This family never knew any other sort of music than the songs of Zion, and I'm absolutely sure that it was one of the secrets to their family. (2 Chronicles 5 verse 13)

6. They were diligent in inculcating these principles into the next generation. Now, come and have a look at Psalm 78. Now, Psalm 78 is one of the psalms of the house of Asaph, and there's a key word in this psalm that we ought to just have a look at. In the 78th Psalm it says in verse 1, 'Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us'. Oh, you see that word 'told us'

in verse 3, that word means 'to inscribe', 'to mark', 'to record', 'to recount' and 'to celebrate' (5608); it's a very wonderful word in the Hebrew, to inscribe, to mark, to record, to recount, and to celebrate. And, so, this is a psalm of Asaph, mind you, so you see what the sons of Asaph that composed this psalm said is, that the things that we have heard and known were recounted to us, inscribed upon our hearts and minds, marked within us by our fathers. They told us these things! Now look at verse 4, 'WE will not hide them from their children showing to the generation to come the praises of Yahweh'. Oh, now, do you see the word showing in verse 4, that the very same word translated 'told us' in verse 3, it's the same word. So they heard from their fathers and they in turn will pass it on to the generation to come. Then verse 6 says, 'that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children'. That's the third generation, and you see that word 'declare' in verse 6, why, that's the same word translated 'told' in verse 3 and 'showing' in verse 4; so you see, this is what this family did, is that every generation of this family sat down, and they inscribed on the heart of their children, the principles that their family stood for! They said, 'these are the core values of our family, we praise the Father, we live in God's presence we believe in the supremacy of God, we sing concerning Him, we stand for the principle of excellence; we never deviate from eternal truths and they inscribed that upon the hearts of their children. Those children grew up and inscribed on the hearts of their children, and those children grew up and they inscribed it on the hearts of their children; and that's what this family did through their several generations. They never missed a beat, b&s, in writing those principles on the hearts of the generation that was to come, not in this family. They did that as a standard of the family that they would inculcate those principles. (Psalm 78:1-7; 79:13)

7. They were faithful in maintaining their standards with unswerving devotion as we have seen in these particular studies. They never deviated did they? tremendous constancy and tremendous consistency, this family in the things that they stood for. If we could only have that same spirit, b&s, I'm sure we would start to capture the secret of this family. And certainly as far as music is concerned, we face that challenge, I believe, throughout all the ecclesial world, that there has been a little bit of a shift towards new music from other sources, and much of that music is not consistent with our faith and not consistent with our heritage. We need to treasure the music which has bound our brotherhood together for a long period of time. We need to understand it and we need to treasure it because you'd never catch the house of Asaph singing anything that wasn't absolutely consistent with the spirit of their particular family. (Ezra 3:10-11; Nehemiah 12:35-36)

Now, come and have a look at Psalm 68. In Psalm 68 we're told that in the age to come, well, this is what it says, verse 24, 'They have seen thy goings, O God: even the goings of my God, my King, to the sanctuary. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Bless ye God in the congregations, even Yahweh, from the fountain of Israel'. So, in the age to come, says Psalm 68, there's going to be singers again, and instruments and choirs. Of course, we're not told in Psalm 68 whether the singers here are mortal or immortal

singers.

But, I think in Psalm 87 we're told at least there will be immortal singers, because if you come and have a look at the 87th Psalm we're told this in verse 1, 'His foundation is in the holy mountains. Yahweh loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God' (oh, by the way, did you that that's the line for a hymn? Most glorious things are spoken, Jerusalem of thee', did you know that that came from Psalm 87 verse 3?). It says in this hymn, 'I'll make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest Himself shall establish her'. You see, in the kingdom age there will be brought together men and women from all parts of the earth, from all nations of the earth, but they're all counted as descendants of Zion, verse 5. Verse 6 says, 'Yahweh shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this one, (every one who's granted eternal life), was born there, in Jerusalem'. And then, verse 7 suddenly says, 'As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs (or sources of satisfaction) are in thee'. So in a psalm that celebrates the bringing together of the immortal saints from all parts of the earth, it says there are going to be singers there and the players on instruments; so, you see, I like to think, b&s, and there's good scriptural evidence for this, that in the kingdom age there will be an immortal choir! Sometimes people have often wondered, well, what am I going to do in the kingdom? Well, here's a job! to sing in the choir under David and under Asaph.

We're told in Ezekiel 40 that there will be chambers for the singers; so, I think personally that in the age to come, there will be both an immortal choir and there will be a mortal choir of Levites which shall also sing. If there's going to be a mortal choir of Levites that should sing, of whom might they be composed? and what family might be brought forth again to sing such songs? but the house of Asaph! Now, would you like to see a proof for that? Well, I think we have one, you see, because if you come to the prophecy of Jeremiah, I think that here in Jeremiah we at least have a clue that perhaps in the age to come, there will be a reconstituted house of Asaph, who once again will sing their songs in the age to come. It's a marvellous thought to think that that might be so! although, of course, the immortal choir will be none other than the spiritual descendants of Asaph, and Christ will be the chief Conductor under whose hands we shall sing in that choir in the age to come. In Jeremiah 33 we read these words in verse 7, 'I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first' (of course, these words uttered in the prophecy of Jeremiah had their first fulfillment in the return from Babylon; but the real fulfillment, the greater fulfillment of Jeremiah will come in the age to come, when finally all Israel shall be gathered out of the nations and shall be brought back to the Land of promise). Verse 9 says, 'It shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. Thus saith Yahweh, Again, there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are

desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast; there shall be heard the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride', and why? 'the voice of them that shall say, Praise Yahweh of Armies: for Yahweh is good; for His mercy endureth forever; and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of Yahweh'. Oh, that's 1 Chronicles 16 all over again, the family psalm of the house of Asaph, and Jeremiah 33 says that that song and that psalm will be heard again in the temple, in the kingdom age, when all Israel is gathered back to the Land! Who should sing that song, b&s, but the house of Asaph again, how appropriate it would be that if there were to be any mortal singers, any mortal choir, that it be this house! I like to think that it will be so.

So, how do we become part of the immortal choir? Well, we've got to learn the secret of this family. So, by the way, people tend to look at this and say, 'well that's not such a very big secret, you know! we know about God manifestation, we understand about the spirit of endeavour, we know about singing godly music and daily praise, we know about teaching our children; what's so special about this that it is a secret that belongs to the house of Asaph? Oh, no, that's not the secret, b&s, that there is not the secret! Do you want to know what the secret is? the secret is that this family actually did those things. Other families talked about it, but they never did it. The secret of this family was that they really did it, b&s, everyone of these things they really did them! If we can just capture the spirit of this house by taking up those lessons and living them in our families, then might it be, that we might build families that shall last for the truth for hundreds of years!

We pray that it might not be so, because of the coming of our Lord, but until we see His return, and for whatever time has been left unto us, let us take up the spirit of this house, and learn their secret, so that their story shall not have been told in vain!