

1 Chronicles 6:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, even
Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea,

Analysis

And his brother Asaph—this introduces Asaph (אַסָּף 'gatherer' or 'collector'), one of David's three chief musicians and author of 12 canonical Psalms (50, 73-83). The term **brother** (אָח) indicates fellow Levite, not biological sibling. Asaph **stood on his right hand** (עָלָה יְמִינוֹ) —the position of honor—alongside Heman the Kohathite during temple worship, with Ethan/Jeduthun the Merarite on the left (v. 44).

Asaph's genealogy traces through **Berachiah** (בְּרַכְיָהוּ 'Yahweh blesses') and **Shimea** (שִׁמְעָא 'something heard'), names emphasizing blessing and proclamation—perfect for a worship leader whose Psalms would be 'heard' and 'bless' Israel for millennia. Asaph's prophetic gift (2 Chronicles 29:30 calls his words 'prophecy') made him not merely a musician but a Spirit-anointed messenger through song.

The tri-clan representation (Kohath-Heman, Gershon-Asaph, Merari-Ethan) in temple music demonstrated that all Levitical branches equally participate in praise, breaking down clan rivalry. This anticipates the New Testament truth that all believers—regardless of tribe or nation—are priests offering spiritual sacrifices of praise (1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 13:15).

Historical Context

David appointed Asaph around 1000 BC as chief musician when the ark was brought to Jerusalem. Asaph's descendants maintained this role through the First

Temple era (970-586 BC), during Hezekiah's reforms (2 Chronicles 29:30), and returned from exile (Ezra 2:41). The Chronicler highlights Asaph to encourage post-exilic worship renewal, showing that authentic praise requires both Spirit-empowered gifting and legitimate genealogical standing.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Asaph's role as both 'gatherer' (his name) and prophet-musician challenge modern divisions between artistic gift and spiritual authority?
2. What does the tri-clan representation in temple worship teach about unity-in-diversity within Christ's body?

Interlinear Text

וְאָחִיו	אַסָּף	הָעֹמֵד	עַל	יְמִינוֹ	אַסָּף	בֶּן
And his brother	Asaph	who stood	H5921	on his right hand	Asaph	the son
H251	H623	H5975		H3225	H623	H1121
בְּרַכְיָהוּ	בֶּן	שִׁמְעָא				
of Berachiah	the son	of Shimea				
H1296	H1121	H8092				

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 7:44 (Parallel theme): The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred forty and eight.

Ezra 2:41 (Parallel theme): The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight.

Psalms 73:1 (Parallel theme): Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

Psalms 77:1 (Parallel theme): I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

Psalms 79:1 (Parallel theme): O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

Psalms 75:1 (Parallel theme): Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

Psalms 83:1 (Parallel theme): Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

Psalms 81:1 (Parallel theme): Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

Nehemiah 12:46 (Parallel theme): For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.

Nehemiah 11:17 (Parallel theme): And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.