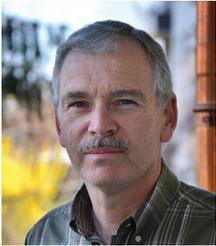


Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

EXCERPTS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEGACY OF A CAPPELLA MUSIC IN DIVINE WORSHIP



by Harlan Sorrell

Instrumental music was not introduced into so-called Christian worship until late in the Roman Catholic apostasy, and even then, the Catholic Church accepted it reluctantly. The Greek Orthodox Church never accepted

mechanical instruments into their worship at all, and it is evident that the Protestant reformers removed them from worship.

The word *a cappella* is an Italian word, coming from two Latin words, *a* meaning “according to,” and *cappella* meaning “chapel.” Webster defines *a cappella* thus: “In the style of church or chapel music; especially in the old style, without accompaniment.” It is a fact of history that this was the style of church music from apostolic times.

The old-time Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, spoke correctly and accurately when he said mechanical instruments “hinder rather than help our praise.” The sweetest music that has ever been heard on earth is the voices of saints blending in rich, harmonious tones as they sing in the Spirit. Such music has a heavenly ring that charms and thrills the pure in heart as well as draws the attention of sinners.

All who study the Scriptures and church history in-depth know why the apostolic church never used mechanical instruments and why the Anabaptists as well as reformers like Martin Luther, John Wesley, and many others, including D. S. Warner, rejected their use in spiritual worship. They used musical instruments to aid the composing of written music for their songs, or for personal or social enjoyment, but they rejected their use in *worship* because they understood the principles taught in John 4:23-24 and Acts 17:24-25, etc. To them, worship was the outpouring of the *inner man*, whether in prayer, preaching, or song. Mechanical instruments in spiritual worship were considered out of place. As history states concerning the primitive Christians, they “were of too spiritual a fiber to substitute lifeless instruments for, or use them to accompany, the human voice” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*. X, 651). There is no sweeter music on earth than the perfect blending of human voices in four-part harmony. Unfortunately, the majority of the populace of today’s world has never had the opportunity to hear this kind of superb, heavenly music. It touches and inspires the soul like no other.

In this dispensation, acceptable and true worship takes place when people are raised up to sit with Christ in heavenly places

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“The sweetest music that has ever been heard on earth is the voices of saints blending in rich, harmonious tones as they sing in the Spirit.”



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WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

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Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;
1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;
Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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in the Spirit. This kind of worship can neither be ceremonially nor mechanically produced but only takes place by the interaction of the human spirit with the divine Spirit. We sing, pray, and prophesy (preach) in the Spirit, having New Testament authority to include all this in our worship. But we find no New Testament injunction for *playing* in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit only anoints the music that flows from the inner human spirit and soul. God has no interest or delight in the music we may produce by skillful hands. He desires to hear and smell the vibrations and incense of the melodies of our hearts.

There are those who feel that to remove the use of musical instruments from their worship services would negate the quality of their worship services. That is not the case at all if the services are led and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The quality of a worship service is actually enhanced when the mechanical element is removed from it and the service becomes the outflow of a spiritual communion between the spirits of the worshipers and the Spirit of God. It is then that we get to hear the sound that God is interested in hearing—the melody and harmony that pours forth from hearts tuned to His Spirit and vibrating with chords of divine life and glory. God didn't remove the formality and ceremonialism of the Old Testament to leave us with something inferior. He gave us something much better! A cappella music in divine worship should never be viewed as an imposition, but rather as a priceless legacy from the purest days of primitive Christianity.

“The Lord once dwelt in temples made with hands,
And had one people, Israel's chosen bands;
And at Jerusalem, in formal ways, [D. O. Teasley]
Was worshiped by the just of olden days.”

But better things than these God had in store,
When ordinances of old should be no more [Heb. 9:10],
And He should dwell within man's inward parts,
And worship be the incense of our hearts.



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—Editor, Michael Smith

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Editorial



Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.—Psalm 29:2

This quarter we once again build upon the foundation of Issue 18 concerning the two covenants that God established. No longer do God's people serve Him after the flesh but after the spirit. The use of musical instruments was absent from formal worship in the New Testament church. The sound from spiritless instruments brings no more glory to God in worship than does the lighting of candles in worship service. God is praised with that which comes out of the mouth from a holy and pure heart. Many people say that this issue is unimportant and optional. Should we then also burn incense and follow the other examples of worship in the Old Testament? New Testament teaching neither condoned nor commended these practices because they were superseded by spiritual worship. At best, the use of musical instruments in worship is inadvisable.

I have been in many services in the USA and abroad where people used musical instruments as part of their worship. While at times it did entertain the flesh, I have yet to find where it added spiritual value to worship. On the contrary, among people who seemed to have a real heart for God, I have found musical instruments to be a hindrance to the free flow of the Spirit of God in their midst. From a musical standpoint, some very small congregations may feel the need to use a piano or other instrument to support the singing effort. It is still better to worship with the offering of our lips as instructed in the Word without instruments.

Many people defend the use of instruments in worship declaring that it is a cultural practice. While the use of drums or pianos may be a cultural practice that people love, it does not take long to see that the enjoyment is usually after the flesh.

Some say that souls will be drawn to the services and won to the Lord if musical instruments are used. This is indicative of a lack of spiritual understanding. John 6:43-44 says that "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him." What we draw people with is what we draw them to. If we use fleshly means to draw and move the crowd, we will have to continue to use fleshly things to keep them entertained lest they go away. The Holy Spirit wants to set the tone and it is the Spirit that can bring forth godly repentance and touch the heart of man.

Music is of the Lord and was a wonderful gift to mankind. God's people are instructed to *sing* to glorify God and to edify one another. Instruments are cheap substitutes for the true anointing and moving of the Spirit of God. If the Spirit of God is not anointing a worship service, the service is dull and dead. Without the Spirit, it is no wonder that people would desire musical instruments to fill in the gap—how much better to sing in the spirit as taught by the Word and practiced by the early morning church. A cappella singing is the "more perfect way" and should be the practice of God's people.

Michael W. Smith

July 2017



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Bible Study Guide

Subject: Music in Worship

Scripture Reading: *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

—John 4:23-24

Summary: Musical instruments were used in the Old Testament when service to God was based on ritual and ceremony after the flesh. Worship in the New Testament dispensation is to be in spirit and God instructs His people to *sing* not to *play*. A cappella singing is the biblical pattern and practice for God's church.

Types & Symbols of Musical Instruments

There is great beauty in reflecting upon musical instruments as types and symbols of the unity brought by the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's people.

When Solomon's temple was dedicated, 120 priests sounded trumpets as one with the singers to praise and thank God (2 Chronicles 5:12-14).

The glory of the Lord came down and filled the temple.

In the New Testament, on the day of Pentecost, 120 followers of Christ were in the upper room in one accord. The Holy Spirit descended and filled them with His glory. They then became instruments of righteousness doing the will of God.

I. Musical Instruments in the Old Testament

- A. Genesis 4:21 Invented by Jubal.
- B. Ecclesiastes 2:8 Delights of the sons of men.
- C. Exodus 15:20-21 Miriam plays.
- D. 2 Chronicles 20:27-28 Used for rejoicing in victory.
- E. 1 Samuel 10:5 Prophets accompanied by instruments.

II. King David and Musical Instruments

- A. 1 Samuel 16:15-23 A skilled player. Drove the spirit from Saul.
- B. Psalm 33:1-3 Praise with instruments. (Psalm 150:1-6)
- C. 1 Chronicles 15:15-16 Instruments appointed by David.

III. Instruments in Temple Worship an Ordinance of David

- A. 1 Chronicles 23:5 David makes instruments for the house of God. (2 Chronicles 5:1)
- B. 1 Chronicles 25:6 Instruments according to David's order.
- C. 2 Chronicles 29:25-28 Ordained and used as commanded by David. (Ezra 3:10)

IV. Reproof of the Prophets

- A. Isaiah 5:11-13 Music used in fleshly feasts.
- B. Amos 6:1-5 Woe pronounced on those who invent instruments of music like David. (Amos 5:21-24)

V. A New Standard in the New Testament Dispensation

- A. Matthew 5:17 The law fulfilled.
- B. Hebrews 10:1-9 A new standard.
- C. John 4:23-24 True worshippers worship in spirit and in truth.
- D. Acts 17:22-25 God is not worshipped with men's hands.

VI. New Testament Teaching and Practice

- A. Matthew 26:30 Jesus and disciples sang an hymn.
- B. Romans 15:9 Sing to glorify God.
- C. 1 Corinthians 14:15 Sing with the spirit and with understanding.
- D. Ephesians 5:18-20 Sing and make melody in the heart.
- E. Colossians 3:16 Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. (James 5:13)
- F. Hebrews 2:12 Sing praises.
- G. Hebrews 13:15 Offer the sacrifice of praise from the lips.

VII. Worldly Worship

- A. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 Lovers of pleasure.
- B. 1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world.

VIII. Spiritual Worship

- A. Romans 12:1-2 Be not conformed to this world.
- B. 1 Peter 2:5 Offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Conclusion: *Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

—Colossians 3:16



Music IN WORSHIP

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23).

Thus spoke Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well. The words of Christ clearly intoned that a change had come and that the manner and condition of true worship would be different.

True Worship Desired

In the dispensation before Christ, worship was ritualistic and ceremonial in nature. God’s people kept certain days holy, offered sacrifices, burned incense, observed ritualist washing, played musical instruments in worship, and the list goes on. With the coming of Christ, God was no longer satisfied with worship of the flesh by the flesh but was interested in the spiritual communion of man’s heart through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. While false worship continues today, God is still looking for true worshippers.

A large part of the modern-day Christian worship service revolves around the use of musical instruments. It should be the desire of children of God to be “true worshippers” and to conduct themselves in a way that becometh holiness and brings the greatest honor, reverence, and adoration to God. Worship service should be a time to give glory to God and should be for the spiritual edification

of the body of believers. With that purpose in mind and heart, can God be worshipped acceptably with musical instruments?

There are many things that God did not mention by name in the Bible, but He left principles of truth to follow. Coupled with historical evidence and practical observance, it is clear through the Word and Spirit that the use of musical instruments is not edifying to spiritual worship in this dispensation of grace.

Origin of Musical Instruments

Genesis 4:21 informs us that Jubal, an ancestor of Cain, was the “father of all such as handle the harp and organ.” The descendants of Cain were referred to in the Scripture as the “sons of men” because they did not follow God as did some of the descendants of Seth, “the sons of God.” It is interesting that the invention of musical instruments came from an ungodly people who had no interest in pleasing God. While musical instruments are not wrong to use for some purposes and in some settings, the enemy has used them throughout the generations to draw people away from the one who can truly minister to the heart and give real soul peace. Solomon testified to gathering gold and silver, singers, and “the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts” (Ecclesiastes 2:8); and yet he confessed that all was “vanity and vexation of spirit” (2:11). While the sound of instruments can entertain, soothe, and placate the mind temporarily, it has never been capable of bringing about righteousness.

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Old Testament Use of Instruments

Musical instruments were used in the Old Testament by God's people to varying degrees. After crossing the Red Sea, Miriam, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand and danced with the other women (Exodus 15:20-21) in a fleshly display of their rejoicing and praise to the Lord. Instruments were used after military victories (2 Chronicles 20:27-28) and trumpets were used among God's people for signals and calls to worship. Saul met a group of prophets accompanied by musical instruments coming from the hills (1 Samuel 10:5). The prophet Elisha called for a minstrel to play for him (likely to calm his mind) before prophesying under the influence of the Lord (2 Kings 3:14-15). While musical instruments were used, it is noteworthy that they were never used in *tabernacle* worship. With all of the specificity from God concerning the tabernacle architecture, furniture, and protocol for sacrifice and worship, musical instruments were not used in the actual worship.

“Instruments were not used in active worship until David; and then the Scripture always clarifies that it was ordained or commanded by the king.”

David—Lover of Music

King David, even as a young man, was a skilled harp player. When King Saul was overtaken by an evil spirit, David would play for him, Saul would be refreshed, and the spirit would depart (1 Samuel 16:15-23). This is a testament to the power of music. Music can touch the spirit of man in a way that words cannot. While the use of mechanical instruments may displace the trouble and problems in the mind, it is of the flesh and will not bring about lasting change.

David was a man who loved music and the instruments upon which it was made. When the ark of the covenant was moved, they did so as “Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord” (1 Chronicles 15:15-16); however, David had the chief of the Levites appoint people to be singers with instruments of music. While this was not necessarily ordered of God, it was indicative of David's propensity to music. The Psalms are full of David's expressions of praise and they laud the use of instruments upon which to praise the Lord (Psalm 150:1-6). “Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise” (Psalm 33:3).

King David Appoints Instruments

King David made instruments for the house of God (1 Chronicles 23:5). While instruments were not used in the *tabernacle*, the Scripture clearly states that singers and players were appointed for *temple* worship “according to the king's order” (1 Chronicles 25:6). Levites were set in the temple with instruments “according to the commandment of David” and the instruments were “ordained by David king of Israel” (2 Chronicles 29:25-28). After Solomon's temple was destroyed and the new temple was being erected after the Babylonian captivity, Ezra 3:10 tells of the Levites using instruments to praise the LORD “after the ordinance of David king of Israel.” While worship during this time was more ceremonial and not as spiritual, it is at minimum noteworthy, if not significant, that instruments were not used in active worship until David; and then the Scripture always clarifies that it was ordained or commanded by the king.



Prophetic Woe Pronounced

The prophet Isaiah pronounced a woe upon those that were inflamed with strong drink, feasted, and had musical instruments at their feasts and yet regarded not the Lord. The prophet Amos even more directly reproves God's people: "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria.... that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David" (Amos 6:1-5). God despised the feast days and no longer accepted the sacrifices. "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols" (Amos 5:21-24). With all of the beauty and melody of David's instruments which were able to touch the human emotions, they never brought the children of Israel into a spiritual relationship with God. One author penned the question: "If man's inventions failed to produce spiritual fruits under the old law, how can we expect they will produce spirituality under the new dispensation?"

New Covenant Introduces Spiritual Worship

The law was fulfilled (Matthew 5:17) and the way of true righteousness and holiness was made available through Christ. The first covenant was taken away that Jesus might "establish the second" (Hebrews 10:1-9) and perfect that of which the law was incapable. This new life through Christ completely changed the daily conduct and worship of God's true children. No longer were the mandates of fleshly worship imposed but there was liberating, spiritual communion unhindered by the things of the flesh. Paul preached to the Athenians on Mars' hill and boldly declared that God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing" (Acts 17:22-25). God was neither worshipped nor glorified by the work and skill of men's hands nor did He dwell in the beautiful temples made for Himself or for false gods. God is a spirit and is only truly worshipped by those to whom He gave life and breath. Man came fully equipped to worship God and needs nothing more than life and breath to offer himself as an instrument of righteousness.

The Flesh vs. the Spirit

Worship in the Old Testament was physical and literal, but now all true acceptable worship is that of the Spirit. True spiritual worship dictates the eradication of the fleshly worship by sacrifices, incense, and music from lifeless instruments. The New Testament Scripture prescribes a new and better way of worship and was exemplified by Christ and the early morning church. After the Passover feast, Jesus and His disciples "sang an hymn" (Matthew 26:30). Gone are the instruments of Jubal and David in the New Testament church. No longer is God worshipped by the sound that emanates from a mechanical instrument, but rather He is worshipped in the beauty of genuine holiness—that which human talent cannot manufacture. Romans 15:9 says "sing unto thy name." Paul instructs the congregation at Corinth to sing with the spirit and sing with the understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15). There is no understanding in the sound from the instrument but from the heart and mouth of the justified. The early morning church was never instructed to play an instrument in praise to the Lord; Rather, they were repeatedly told to "sing praise" (Hebrews 2:12). "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). The Colossians were encouraged to teach and admonish one another in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts" (Colossians 3:16).

"If man's inventions failed to produce spiritual fruits under the old law, how can we expect they will produce spirituality under the new dispensation?"



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Only Vocal Music Authorized in the New Testament

The New Testament does not directly forbid the use of instrumental music in worship, but there is clearly no authorization given to use instrumental music just as there was not authorization to burn incense and light candles. The contrast between the Old and New Testament teaching and practice is very evident, and approval cannot be assumed for something when it was not given. The Word of God is not only silent on the use of musical instruments in the New Testament, it clearly instructs the saints to sing and make melody in their hearts. They are to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Hebrews 13:15). Vocal music is the only music authorized by God for Christian worship.

Early Church Practices

History verifies that the early morning church worshipped by singing as taught by the Scripture and did not use musical instruments. Consider the following quotes:



“The use of music was not received in the Christian churches, as it was among the Jew, in their infant state, but only the use of plain song” (Justin Martyr. A.D. 139).

“The one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honor God, is what we employ. We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute” (Clement of Alexandria. A.D. 153-217).

“Musical concerts with viol and lute belong to Apollo, to the Muses, to Minerva and Mercury who invented them; ye who are Christians, hate and abhor these things whose very authors themselves must be the object of loathing and aversion” (Tertullian. c. A.D. 200).

“Instruments appertain not to Christians” (John Chrysostom. A.D. 345-407).

“Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so” (Joseph Bingham. *Works*. Vol. III, p. 137).

“There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was everywhere entirely of a vocal nature” (Emil Nauman. *The History of Music*. Vol. I, p. 177).

“The Christian community held the same view, as we know from the apostolic and post-apostolic literature: instrumental music was thought unfit for religious services; the Christian sources are quite outspoken in their condemnation of instrumental performances. Originally, only song was considered worthy of direct approach to Divinity” (*New Oxford History of Music*. Vol I, p. 135).

“Only singing, however, and no playing of instruments was permitted in the early church” (Hugo Leichtentritt).

“The music they used, reproduced the spirit of their religion—an inward quietude. All the music employed in their early services was vocal” (F. L. Humphrey. *Evolution of Church Music*).

“I HAVE NO OBJECTION TO INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN OUR CHAPELS
PROVIDED THEY ARE NEITHER HEARD NOR SEEN.”

—JOHN WESLEY (1703-1791)

Introduction of Instruments in the Catholic Church

It was not until the 5th or 6th century that musical instruments were reintroduced on a small scale in the Catholic church. It did not make a major inroad in the church until the 16th century. There were enough people protesting their use that the Counsel of Trent (1545) came very close to abolishing their use (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*. II, 1702). Years later, most of the protestant reformers did not use musical instruments in worship. While it may seem strange to people today for the saints to sing a cappella, the use of musical instruments in worship was taught against in most major denominations for many years.

Modern Church Embraces Musical Instruments

As recent as the 19th century, most Christian leaders refused to use musical instruments in worship service, believing they were unworthy of divine worship. After the Civil War ended in the United States in 1865, a minister, Benjamin Franklin, noted that there were approximately 10,000 Christian congregations in America and not over 50 used instruments in worship. The widespread use of musical instruments has taken hold since that time. Churches seem to be more interested in gaining a large crowd and ministering to the

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FROM THE REFORMERS...

“THE ORGAN IN THE WORSHIP IS THE INSIGNIA OF BAAL. THE ROMAN CATHOLICS BORROWED IT FROM THE JEWS.”

—MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)

“Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to Him.”

— John Calvin (1509-1564)
Commentary on the 33rd Psalm

“HE (D.S. WARNER) TAUGHT PLAINLY AND FORCIBLY AGAINST THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD. NONE OF THE CONGREGATIONS [OF THE CHURCH OF GOD] USED THEM IN HIS DAY.”

**—C. E. ORR (1844-1933)
*NOT A NEW MOVEMENT***

“I [further] believe that the use of such instruments of music, in the Christian church, is without the sanction and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion and that they are sinful....I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity.”

—Adam Clarke (1762-1832)
Commentary on Amos 6:5

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flesh rather than the spirit. The compromise started with using the organ and piano and has grown to bands and groups using all kinds of instruments. The music of the world has become the music of professing Christian churches. This modern era of performance-based praise and worship is after the flesh. While musical instruments can draw on the emotions and spirit of man, it is a fleshly power and is not an element of true spiritual worship.

Spiritual Worship Desired

Regardless of cultural practices and traditions, from the beating of the drums in Africa, to the organs of Asia, to the orchestras of Europe, to the bands of America, the simplicity of spiritual worship must supersede societal norms and preferences. These fleshly modes of worship are of the world and draw on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). Many congregations, loving the world, have left the simple mode of spiritual worship that was taught in the Scripture and was exemplified by the early morning church. The apostle Paul

warned Timothy that in the last days “perilous times shall come. For men shall be....lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Holy Spirit Led Worship

God’s people are still called today to let their lives be a holy, living sacrifice. “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2). Spiritual worship is not just the absence of musical instruments but it is the presence of the Holy Spirit flowing from a holy life. May our spirits be in tune with the music of Heaven and may the harmony flow from hearts full of the grace of God. Let us ever be lively stones, a spiritual house, and an holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5).

—mws

Biblical Instruction

Worship in Spirit and Truth. —John 4:23-24

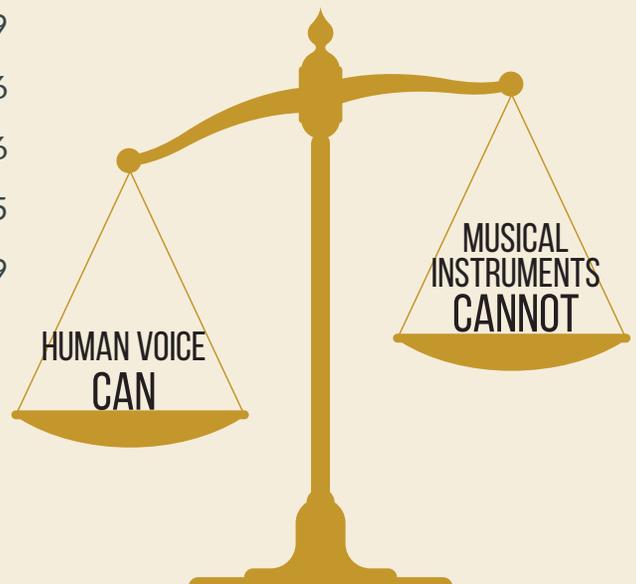
Speak to Yourselves in Song. —Ephesians 5:19

Teach & Admonish One Another. —Colossians 3:16

Sing with Grace in the Heart. —Colossians 3:16

Sing with the Spirit & Understanding.—1 Corinthians 14:15

Make Melody in the Heart. —Ephesians 5:19





Is it a sin to use musical instruments in worship service?

The use of musical instruments is not wrong in and of itself; but according to the Scripture and church history, the use of musical instruments in worship service is not the proper or acceptable way to worship God. We must be careful about a blanket condemnation of everyone that does use instruments because people may have varying amounts of light and discernment on this subject. There are some issues that are not always black and white sin, but the goal of all honest souls should be to follow the Lord as closely and carefully as possible.

James 4:17 states, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." If someone knows and understands this truth by the Spirit, and refuses to change because of the "love of the instruments," that then becomes sin due to the rebellion of heart. Worshiping in the Spirit without the use of mechanical instruments is the more perfect way. Those not observing this precept are living substandard to New Testament example and are missing out on the greater blessings of true spiritual worship. —mws

Why shouldn't we follow the commands of David to worship God with musical instruments, especially since David was a "man after God's own heart"?

All Scripture must be interpreted and applied according to its dispensational context. In Psalm 144:1, David says, "Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." It is true that God blessed David in all his wars and fighting, and helped him to kill and destroy his enemies but that is foreign to the Gospel dispensation. God now requires us to cease from wars and fighting, to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us and despitefully use us, and to "resist not evil" (Matt. 5:38-45). God also allowed David to have multiple wives and blessed him and the offspring he brought forth by those wives. God condemns such a practice in the present dispensation and will never bless any man who should follow

David's example. Therefore, all Scripture must be interpreted and applied according to its dispensational context. This holds true relative to Psalm 150:3-8 and other Psalms that command the use of musical instruments or dancing in worship to God. No Old Testament text can annul any New Testament doctrine or principle. The New Testament is the "better testament," and is the one God requires us to live by today.

Yes, David, in his dispensation, was "a man after God's own heart." But he who would be a man after God's own heart in this dispensation must rise to a much higher plane than David ever knew or had the privilege of knowing. —Harlan Sorrell

In Romans 15:9 and James 5:13 the word *sing* is translated from the Greek word *psallō*. Do these Scriptures support the use of musical instruments in the New Testament?

No, these Scriptures do not advocate or instruct the use of musical instruments. The use of the word *psallō* has caused some controversy because of the evolution of the word's meaning through the centuries. One definition, shown in many Greek language lexicons, is to "twang or pluck" as in playing

a stringed instrument. However, the lexicons of learned, reputable Biblical scholars demonstrate that when the word is used in the New Testament, it means to "sing."

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament notes that *psallō* in the New Testament signifies "to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song."

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words similarly gives the classical definition of *psallō* and then says "in the N.T., to sing a hymn, sing praise." —mws



DID YOU KNOW?

And 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. —Revelation 5:8

The book of Revelation is symbolic in nature and paints a beautiful picture of the saints gathered around the throne with harps in their hands, singing the song of redemption. These harps in heaven are not literal but symbolic of the praise being given to God. They typify the unity and oneness that come from being in harmony with the Spirit.



A Word
in Season

TUNE YOUR HARPS

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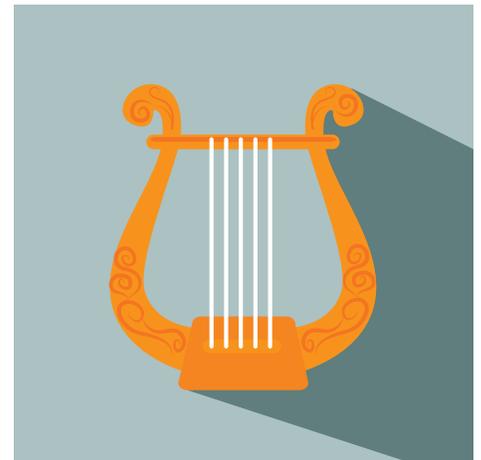
“Tune your harps ye ransomed throng, and extol the Christ.
Sing the name that opened mercy’s door;
Oh, ‘tis music, sweetest music to sinners lost,
Sweetest to the saints forevermore.”

—Warner, Daniel. *The Music of His Name*.

Before a symphony begins to play, musicians tune their instruments to the concert pitch so they can blend in one accord. The sound would be discordant when the symphony began to play if each member had tuned his instrument to a different standard. When they measure to the leader, the harmonious sound is beautiful.

When people gather to worship the Lord, it is vital that each person has prepared his heart and is in tune with the Holy Spirit; thus the author said, “tune your harps.” Worship service is a time to leave the pressures and cares of life to collectively glorify and learn of Christ. If the congregation is out of tune with the Spirit, there will likewise be a discordant sound.

The harmony of the Spirit comes from hearts that have adjusted their lives to the standard of the Master. It is also imperative for the benefit of the worship service that the ministry and spiritual leaders empty themselves of the burdens of life and tune their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit. When this is accomplished, the anointing is richer and the congregation is more fully blessed by the free flow of the Holy Spirit. “Tune your harps” that the joy of the Lord may abound in praise and worship to the Lord. —mws



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD