

Sing Me A Song (Instrumental Music In Worship To God)

- A. **Our visitors** are often curious about our song services.
1. “Where’s the music?” Can’t you afford the sound equipment.” “Don’t you have any musicians?” “Oh, I remember, it’s part of your church’s tradition.”
- B. **But we want** them to know that we sing without accompaniment as a matter of faith (Rom 10:17; 14:23).

Col 3:16 – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching & admonishing one another in psalms & hymns & spiritual songs, *singing* with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Eph 5:18-20 – And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 *speaking to one another* in psalms & hymns & spiritual songs, *singing & making melody in your heart to the Lord*, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

[That brings up a very important question.]

I. WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP?

- A. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, that acceptable worship must be “**In spirit**” (John 4:24).
1. Worship is not merely public exhibition (Matt 6:5-7); it is performed in the sanctuary of the heart.
- B. “**In truth**”
1. Concerned with divine truth over human traditions (Matt 15:8-9).
 2. God’s command – “sing” (specific), like “gopher wood”, “unleavened bread”
 3. If the command was to “play or make music” (general), then any type of music acceptable.
 4. Jesus was making a contrast between physical & spiritual worship.

- a. Worship under the Old Law emphasized *physical forms* & those *forms* became the true, actual, real things to the Jews.
- b. But those *forms* were only images & shadows of the true & eternal things in heaven.

Heb 9:23-24 – Therefore *it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these*, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

Heb 10:1 – For *the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, & not the very image of the things*, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

- 5. Worship under the New Covenant emphasizes the spiritual man, the truth of God & the spiritual things of heaven.
- 6. And to make that point even more emphatic, the apostles teach us...

- a. Worship offered from His *spiritual temple* (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19-22).
- b. By a *holy & royal priesthood* (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15).
- c. Their prayers & songs a *sweet incense* to God (Rev 5:8).

7. But today, most people evaluate their worship of God by their feelings & emotions.

- a. They have it backwards; *true worshippers* are moved to emotion by the knowledge that they are giving God what He wants to receive.
- b. God wants not only our worship, but He also wants us to use singing as a method of teaching & admonishing one another.
- c. Song leaders should choose both types of songs.

[As Christians, we want to offer in worship to God that which is in keeping with what He wants.]

II. BIBLICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

A. Didn't They Use Instruments In OT Worship?

1. The phrase "instruments of God" is used in some versions, when David placed the ark in the tabernacle (1 Chron 16:42) – misleading

AMP – With them were Heman & Jeduthun with trumpets & cymbals for those who should sound aloud, & *instruments for accompanying the songs of God*. And the sons of Jeduthun were to be at the gate.

Young's literal – *instruments of the song of God*.

2. Musical instruments are associated with the commandment of David (2 Chron 29:25-30).

2 Chron 29:25 (Hezekiah & the Temple) – And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, & with harps, *according to the commandment of David*, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; *for thus was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets*.

- a. This implies that instruments were not part of the law given to Moses at Sinai.
 - b. They were not used in worship to God in the first tabernacle.
 - c. David (prophet – King) was allowed to introduce instruments, though it was not part of the Law.
 - d. There were many acts of worship prescribed in the OT that are not commanded in the NT, & the NT is complete, nothing can be added to it (John 16:13; Phil 4:9).
3. In fact, throughout Israel's history, instrumental music bore a direct connection to the sacrificial system of worship under the Law (Num10:1-10).

2 Chron 29:27-28 – Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, *the song of the LORD also began, with the trumpets & with the instruments of David king of Israel*. 28 So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, & the trumpeters sounded; *all this continued until the burnt offering was finished*.

- a. Notice that the use of the instruments began & ended with the sacrificing of the burnt offering.
- b. Notice what occurred after the burnt offerings were made to the LORD.

2 Chron 29:29-30 – And when they had finished offering, *the king & all who were present with him bowed & worshiped* 30 Moreover King Hezekiah & the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David & of Asaph the seer. *So they sang praises with gladness, & they bowed their heads & worshiped.*

- c. So after the atoning sacrifice was made for sin, the instruments ceased to be used – it was at that point the personal worship of God began.
4. Musical instruments were a part of a covenant that predated our Lord’s covenant & the laws pertaining to that new covenant (**Heb 10:1**).

B. Aren’t There Instruments In Heaven? (**Rev 14:1-3**)

1. This question comes from (**Rev 14:1-3; 15:2**).
2. Christ was showing John the spiritual realm with earthly images (metaphors).
 - a. “A Lamb standing on Mount Zion” – Christ’s authority over the church.
 - b. “144,000 with His Father’s name on their foreheads” – The Lord can identify His people on this earth.
 - c. “A VOICE from heaven, LIKE THE VOICE of many waters... loud thunder... harpists playing their harps. And they SANG... a new song before the throne.” (In the Greek text, “voice” is used with each metaphor, & the adverb “like”.)

Kaí eékousa fooneén ek tou ouranou [voice from heaven] hoos fooneén hudátoon polloón [like voice of many waters] kaí hoos fooneén bronteés megálees [like voice of loud thunder] kaí hee fooneé heén eékousa hoos kitharoodoón kitharizóntoon en taís kithárais autoón [voice like harpers harping on their harps]

C. Doesn't The Word "Psalms" Include Instruments?

1. The Greek word "Psallo" is translated "sing" ([Rom 15:9](#); [1 Cor 14:15](#); [Jas 5:13](#)).
2. "Psallo" is translated "*making melody*" – a transitive verb – "*in your heart*" ([Eph 5:19](#))
3. The word "psalms" ([Eph 5:19](#); [Col 3:16](#)) doesn't necessitate the use of an instrument.

In OT times, the word "psallo" meant, "to pluck"; the plucking of hair on the face. Later, plucking a string or a carpenter's line. Later, playing a stringed instrument. By NT times it came to mean, "singing." That's why 7 of the soundest Biblical translations translate *psallo* with the word "sing".

D. The Bible Doesn't Say Not To Use Instruments?

1. The NT doesn't say NOT TO do many things that we should NOT DO.

2. Many of God's people suffered greatly for acting on His silence:

- a. Cain ([Gen 4](#))
- b. Moses ([Num 20](#))
- c. Nadab & Abihu ([Lev 10](#))
- d. David & Uzzah ([2 Sam 6](#))
- e. Saul ([1 Sam 13; 15](#))
- f. King Uzziah ([2 Chron 26](#))

[And what does ([Romans 15:4](#)) tell us?]

3. Christians are warned to not go beyond the things written by the apostles ([1 Cor 4:6](#)).
- a. "Singing hymns to God" ([Acts 16:25](#)).
 - b. "I will confess you among the Gentiles, & sing to Your name" ([Rom 15:9](#)).

- c. *“I will sing with the spirit, & I will also sing with the understanding” (1 Cor 14:15).*
- d. *“Singing & making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph 5:19).*
- e. *“Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col 3:16).*
- f. *“In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You” (Heb 2:12).*
- g. *“Praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips” (Heb 13:15).*
- h. *“Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms” (Jas 5:13).*

[God’s silence speaks loudly; His command is to sing.]

III. PERSONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

A. Shouldn’t our style of worship adapt to our culture?

1. Should our morals adapt to our culture?

2. But the true worship of God has never been driven by the culture of the day, but rather by obedience to God’s Word.

- a. The style of the songs may change, but style may NOT alter the command.

B. Shouldn’t People Use Their Talents?

1. Churches often feature people with special talents: pianists, organists & vocalists.
2. In churches of Christ: praise teams, choirs, small groups & soloists.
3. But the worship of God is a level playing field where everyone participates alike, though men are to take the lead.
4. You don’t need a special talent, what you need is...

- a. A heart that is not looking for praise, but desiring to worship God.
- b. A mouth that can utter the words He wants to hear from us.
- c. And, you must be in a right relationship with God through His Son (Gal 3:26-29).

C. Hasn't The Church Always Used Instruments?

1. Historians disagree as to when the first instrument was introduced.

Thomas Aquinas 13th century: “Instruments of music such as harps & psalteries, *the church does not adopt for divine praises*, lest it should seem to Judaize.”

Chrysostom, 3rd century: “Therefore, just as the Jews are commanded to praise God with all musical instruments *so we are commanded to praise him with all our members* - the eye, the tongue, ear, the hand. These instruments were then allowed because of the weakness of the people, to train them to love & harmony.”

Reformation leaders rejected their use:

John Calvin (1509-1564; Presbyterian): "*Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, & the restoration of the other shadows of the law.*"

Charles Hadden Spurgeon (1834-1892; Baptist): "David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, & assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship & that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. *What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, bellows, & pipes!* We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it."

Martin Luther: "The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes & dulcimers; & human voices strive to bear their part with them. *Men run to the church as to a theater, to have their ears tickled*"

Directory of Worship: (prior to 1881; United Presbyterian Church of America) "*As the use of musical instruments in the New Testament Church has no sanction in the Bible, they shall not be introduced, in any form, in any of our congregations*"

2. The Eastern Orthodox church still does not use instruments of music, & the reason their scholars give is, *it passed away with other forms of Jewish worship*, & is not authorized in the New Covenant.

[This argument doesn't prove or disprove anything with regard to the Bible authority. Church history can be misleading if used as a standard.]

However, it is interesting that history bears out that the early church did not use instruments for many hundreds for years.]

CLOSING

A. **One reason God** commanded His people to sing together is that it demonstrates unity in Christ.

Brother Cecil Barr used to lead singing for us here. I could sit & listen to Cecil sing all day long. But you know what? God has commanded us to speak to one another in song, & to sing with grace & to make melody in our hearts as we worship the Lord God ***together***. And men like brother Barr came along to lift us up to another level in our ability to worship God ***together***.

[Unity was never strengthened by the use of instrumental music in worship.

Fellowship in Christ is too precious to be broken over matters for which there is no authority from Christ.

All agree that God said, "Sing". We can all sing & be unified. But adding the instrument destroyed that unity.

Satan knows that, & I believe he uses issues like this to drive people away from God & each other.

Did you remember, that God commands unity among true believers in Christ?

John 17:20-21 – I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that ***they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, & I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.***

1 Cor 1:10 (sectarianism is sinful) – ***Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, & that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together*** in the same mind & in the same judgment.

I would hate to be one who impeded the unity Christ demands.]