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Should Churches have Musical Instruments?

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Should Churches have Musical Instruments?

Topics.

- Musical instruments and the Old Testament.
 - Musical instruments and the New Testament.
 - Snippets related to Worship, Song and Music.
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INTRODUCTION

Some churches believe that Jesus death and resurrection not only did away with the entire Old Testament Covenant, but also did away with musical instruments since the Old Testament was done away with. To support this theory, they also claim that there is no mention of musical instruments in the New Testament. Based on these two ideas they teach their members that it is a sin to use musical instruments in a church service. This study looks at whether this reasoning is in line with God's will and His word or whether it comes from mans distorted reasoning.

OLD TESTAMENT

THE LYRE AND PIPE AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- **Genesis 4:19-22:** Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰Adah bore Jubal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²²Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah (This is the first mention of musical instruments).

Prior to the flood Lamech a descendant of Cain had two sons Tubal-cain and Jubal they were the founders of the musical arts. Jubal was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe while Tubal-cain was a forger of all metal instruments so musical instruments were existing prior to the flood. Perhaps some might reason that musical instruments were not invented by God's people therefore they should not be used, but if this reasoning was correct then Christians should not be using any of the following:

- Church buildings, because most are built by secular tradesmen.
- Modern Bible translations since most are printed and owned by secular companies.
- Money was invented by secular people and printed by the secular world yet Christians freely use it to expand God's Kingdom.
- Communion cups and trays are mostly made by secular craftsmen.

All Christians use these things without any thought to who might have made them this is because it is not who made a thing that makes it good or bad, but whether that thing that has been invented or made is used for good or bad.

MIRIAM TAMBOURINES AND SINGING

- **Exodus 15:20:** Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing.

Miriam the prophetess and many other women sing the song of Moses accompanied with tambourines. These women are praising God with musical instruments for delivering them from slavery in Egypt and destroying their enemy in the Red Sea, it is one of the greatest moments of Israel's rejoicing and celebrations in their entire history and they celebrate it with musical instruments.

THE OLD TESTAMENT COVENANT

- **Exodus 24:7:** Moses took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: (Israel) and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

Those who teach that it is a sin to use musical instruments in church reason that since musical instruments were part of the Old Testament and the Old Covenant has been done away with then it is logical (according to their reasoning) that musical instruments were also done away with. The flaw in this reason is that not all of the Old Testament has been done away with since not all of the Old Testament is the Old Covenant. The Covenant did not include singing or musical instruments the Covenant was about civil, national and religious ceremonial laws. Musical instruments had nothing to do with the Old Covenant. The entire nation of Israel entered into the Old Testament Covenant with God at Mount Sinai it embraced the following:

- The Ten Commandments and laws about altars.
- Laws on how to treat slaves and law concerning sexual behaviour.
- Laws concerning restitution and laws regarding social justice
- Laws regarding the Sabbath's, sacrifices, feasts and offerings

The Old Testament Covenant also embraced blessings and curses, if Israel obeyed their entire nation would be abundantly blessed and all they did would prosper, in contrast to this if they rebelled and turned to other gods their land, cattle, health and everything they did would come under a curse and they would suffer (See Leviticus chapter 26). The Old Covenant was the civil, national and religious ceremonial laws and the resulting blessings and curses that Jesus did away with when he was nailed to the cross, not the entire Old Testament. Nowhere in the Old Testament Covenant is singing or musical instruments ever mentioned.

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UZZAH AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- **2 Samuel 6:5-7:** David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. ⁶And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. ⁷And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

Teachers that teach that it is sinful to use musical instruments to worship God use these verses to support their claim. They highlight the truth that God smote Uzzah to death while Israel was playing musical instruments when moving the ark, therefore they reason musical instrument must be sinful. This is a very clear case of reading a preconceived idea into a verse, God smote Uzzah not because of the music, but because only the Levitical priests were to touch the Ark.

If God struck Uzzah dead because of the musical instruments why did He only strike Uzzah dead since David and many others were playing on all manner of musical instruments. It is clearly foolish to use these verses to support the teaching that it is sinful and wrong to use musical instruments in a church service.

DAVID HAD FOUR THOUSAND WHO PLAYED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The following verses show that David had four thousand singers and four thousand who played musical instruments and that David told the chief of the Levites to appoint those who could play musical instruments to that ministry.

- **1 Chronicles 23:5:** Moreover four thousand were porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith.
- **1 Chronicles 15:16:** David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.

Many years later when Solomon had finished building the House of the LORD, he ordered musical instruments to be used in the Temple of God.

- **1 Chronicles 25:6-7:** All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. ⁷So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that musical Instruments were very much part of Israel's culture and very much part of their worship. Just pause for a moment, imagine four thousand singers and four thousand musicians playing lyres (an ancient musical instrument with strings) and harps and cymbals etc., how glorious would that sound and be.

WORSHIP IN LEVITICUS

Those who teach that it is a sin to use musical instruments in church use the book of Leviticus to prove their claim, they highlight the fact that the book of Leviticus is a specific book about teaching God's people how to worship the LORD and point out that there is no mention of musical instruments in the book of Leviticus. Because of this they reason that the use of musical instruments should not be used to worship God today. But the reason there is no mention of musical instruments is because true worship is living a life that honours God and does no harm to another human, while the ultimate acts of worship before God is the act of doing-good to others and the sacrificing of one's life for another if called to do so. Worship in song on a Sunday or any other day no matter how beautiful means nothing to God if the ones worshipping are giving God no thought during the rest of the week and living an ungodly life.

Leviticus is all about the civil, national and religious ceremonial laws that if Israel obeyed, they would be in a right standing before God and God would bless their nation. Leviticus is about worship in behaviour and lifestyle and not about worship in song. It is true that the rules and ceremonial laws in Leviticus were done away with when Jesus was crucified, but the fact that there is no mention of musical instruments in the book of Leviticus should prove that music was not included in the Old Covenant and therefore has not been done away with.

TRUMPETERS AND SINGERS WERE HEARD PRAISING AND THANKING THE LORD

- **2 Chronicles 5:12-14:** Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) ¹³It came even to pass, as the

trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endures for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; ¹⁴So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

Here we have one-hundred and twenty priests with trumpets others with cymbals and instruments of music, and singers all making one sound praising and thanking the LORD in the Temple Solomon built.

Now consider this: God told Solomon that He has chosen and consecrated this Temple and that His name, His heart and His eyes would be upon it for all time (2 Chron. 7:16) and here we have one-hundred and twenty plus singers and musicians in the House of the LORD and God fills it with the cloud of His glory. Clearly this shows that God is not against musical instruments being used to praise Him in His Temple.

AT THE COMMAND OF THE LORD MUSICIANS ARE PLACED IN THE TEMPLE

- **2 Chronicles 29:25-28:** Hezekiah set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. ²⁶And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. ²⁷And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. ²⁸And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

Here we are told that it was the commandment of the LORD and of David and the LORD'S prophets that Levites with musical instruments be set up in the Temple of the LORD and that all the congregation worshipped and sang together while those with musical instruments played.

NOTE: David and these prophets came long after the Old Testament Covenant was made with Israel. Surely this shows that musical instruments were not part of the Old Covenant and if they are so sinful to be used in a church service why would God command three prophets to tell the Levites to use them in His Temple.

WOE TO THOSE WHO SING IDLE SONGS TO THE SOUND OF THE HARP

- **Amos 6:5:** "Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, ⁵who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music.

Teachers who are against musical instruments use this verse to support their claim that it is sinful to use musical instruments in a church service. Every good Bible student understands that no verse should be lifted out of context and isolated so that it has to stand on its own, but must be put into the entire context that it is written in.

At the time of Amos, Israel was in a state of idolatry, extravagance, and gross corruption. The rich and powerful were oppressing the poor and the rulers had perverted justice for their own gain and the nation was praising themselves for victory instead of giving God the glory (Amos 6:12-13). Amos in this verse is denouncing the people of Israel for their apostasy, social injustice and rebellion toward God it cannot be used or applied to God's faithful people who are use musical instruments to praise and

worship the LORD with a true and honest heart of thanksgiving. Amos refers to these songs as being idle because they are vain, meaning worthless before God, since they are not singing from an honest heart of gratitude, but out of duty since the entire nation is in a state of corruption and idolatry.

THE BEAUTY AND WONDER OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Since the book of Psalms is filled with numerous songs offered to God by the nation of Israel the following verses are only a very small selection of the beauty and wonder of praise and worship recorded in the Old Testament. Their expressions of praise, faith, sorrow, and frustration cover the vast range of human emotions.

- Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! ²Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! ³Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! ⁴Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! ⁵Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! ⁶Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150:1-6).
- David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets (1 Chron. 13:8).
- Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps (1 Chron. 15:28).
- The priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy endures forever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood (2 Chron. 7:6).

David who God said was a man after His own heart made instruments to praise the Lord with and in the very last Psalm tells everyone to praise God with musical instruments. Throughout the Old Testament Israel played musical instruments and not only sang before God but sang in the very presence of God. The Psalms were written beginning in the fifteenth century B.C. and were probably collected in their final form in the third century B.C.

NEW TESTAMENT

THE TEMPLE AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

The musical services in the Temple at the time of Christ was essentially the same as that in King Solomon's Temple there were two daily services, the morning and evening sacrifices. The morning offering took place before daybreak and the priests would blow three blasts on their silver trumpets, announcing to the city that that the sacrifice was about to be offered. Once the sacrifice had been offered the magrepha (organ) was sounded marking the beginning of the musical service, silver trumpets, cymbals and singing was accompanied by instrumental music and certain Psalms and parts of the Pentateuch were sung.

The following is the weekly order that the Psalms were sung in:

1st Day (Psalm 24) the earth is the Lord's (in commemoration of the first day of creation).

2nd Day (Psalm 48) great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.

3rd Day (Psalm 82) God stands in the congregation of the mighty.

4th Day (Psalm 94) O Lord God to whom vengeance belongs.

5th Day (Psalm 81) sing aloud unto God our strength.

6th Day (Psalm 93) the Lord reigns.

7th Day (Psalm 92) it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord.

The evening sacrifices took place at sunset they were basically the same as the morning sacrifices, which means that the nation of Israel began and ended the day with prayer and praise. In the New Testament there are nineteen verses that speak of singing. Since it appears that there is no mention of musical instruments in these verses, they are used to support the theory that it is sinful to use musical instruments in a church service. The following looks at these nineteen verses to see if they can be used to support such a claim.

JESUS AND THE APOSTLES SING A HYMN

- **Matthew 26:30:** when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

There is no mention of musical instruments in this verse, but remember Jesus and the apostles are moving around all day, teaching and healing the sick. Often, they never even had time to eat or rest. They are also under Roman and Jewish persecution, so it would have been extremely unpractical and difficult for them to travel around with musical instruments. It was safe for them to travel in the crowds during the day, but when night came, they had to flee to the hills for safety, especially just prior to Jesus death since the Pharisees had sent soldiers to find him.

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PAUL AND SILAS SING PRAISES

- **Acts 16:25:** And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Paul and Silas sing praises to God and there is no mention of musical instruments, but Paul and Silas are in prison, where are they going to get musical instruments from.

I WILL CONFESS TO THEE AMONG THE GENTILES, AND SING UNTO THY NAME

- **Romans 15:9-12:** the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing (psallo) unto thy name. ¹⁰And again he saith, Rejoice (euphraino), ye Gentiles, with his people. ¹¹And again, Praise (aineo) the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud (epaineo) him, all ye people.

Because there is no mention of musical instruments in these verses some Bible teachers use them to support their theory that it is sin to use musical instruments in a church service.

Sing: in the context of these verses comes from the Greek word (psallo) and means to play on a stringed instrument to celebrate and worship the divine with music and accompanying odes, to make melody and sing (psalms).

Rejoice: comes from the Greek word (euphraino) and means to be in a good frame of mind, to rejoice and make merry and glad.

Praise: comes from the Greek word (aineo) and means to praise God.

Laud: comes from the Greek word (epaino) and means to applaud, commend, and praise.

Romans fifteen verse nine is cited from the following two verses:

- My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing (shiy) and give praise (zamar) (Psalm 57:7).
- O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing (shiy) and give praise (zamar) even with my glory (Psalm 108:1).

Because these verses do not mention musical instruments those who believe it is a sin to use musical instruments in church use them to support their claim, but the word praise in these verses comes from the Hebrew word (zamar) and means to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument, to play upon it; to make music, accompanied by the voice; to celebrate in song and music. The word sing in these verses comes from the Hebrew word (shiy) and means to sing. The same Hebrew word is used in the following verse for David when he danced through the streets with musical instruments.

- It came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing (shiy) and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music (1 Sam. 18:6).

How can religious teachers possibly use these verses to support the theory that it is wrong to accompany singing with musical instruments to worship and praise God with when a careful study very clearly shows that when Israel worshipped God by song they always had musical instruments accompanying them when it was possible and practical to do so.

UNLESS A PIPE AND HARP IS CLEAR WHO WILL KNOW WHAT IS PIPED OR HARPED?

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- **1 Corinthians 14:6-8:** Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? ⁷And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? ⁸For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

Trumpets are used for battle, but flutes (pipes) and harps are not, many times harps and flutes are used in the Bible in the context of worship. Paul in these verses is using the clearness of musical instruments to explain that there should be clarity of sound when members of the church are speaking in foreign languages. Paul would not be using musical instruments to compare something in a church service that was right and correct with if musical instruments were sinful. The very fact Paul says, "If musical instruments are used, they should give a clear sound and be distinct from each other" shows that musical instruments were being used in the church.

NOTE: there is no mention of church buildings in the New Testament, most churches at the time of the apostles were held in the homes of faithful brothers and sisters.

I WILL SING WITH THE UNDERSTANDING

- **1 Corinthians 14:15-16:** For if I (Paul) pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. ¹⁶Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupies the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understand what you are saying?

Paul is saying that if he prays in his own native language (Hebrew) and Gentiles and those from other nations that are not Jewish do not understand what he is saying even though he is praying from his spirit and he knows what he is praying in his mind his prayer is going to be unfruitful because no one else understands him and therefore cannot be comforted, blessed or encouraged by what he is praying, but if he prays in their language they will understand what is in his mind and be encouraged and edified. The words:

- If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

Mean that even though Paul is praying from his heart (his core inner self) the message that is in his mind is unfruitful because no-one who is listening to him understands what he is saying. The words:

- I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

Mean he will sing and pray from his heart, but rather than speak it or sing it in Hebrew he will use a language those with him understand so that they can say AMEN, which means "I agree, so be it." Paul points out that if no-one understands what he is saying it is impossible for them to agree with him and therefore they cannot say AMEN. The focus of these verses is not musical instruments, but singing in a language everyone can understand, in the previous verses (1 Cor. 14:6-8) Paul said, "If there are musical instruments, they should also give a clear sound."

JESUS SINGS PRAISES IN THE CHURCH

- **Hebrews 2:11-12:** For both he (Jesus) that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them (the redeemed) brethren, ¹²Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing (humneo) praise (humneo) unto thee.

In this verse sing and praise are from the Greek word (humneo) and means to sing a hymn or religious ode and by implication to celebrate or praise God in song. The author here is citing the following Old Testament verse:

- I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee (Psalm 22:22).

In this verse praise is from the Hebrew word (halal) and means to celebrate and to glorify. It is true that in these two verses the Greek and Hebrew meanings only carry the idea of singing, praising, glorifying and celebrating and that there is no mention of musical instruments. But when one looks at the Old Testament celebrations before God, with harps, lyres, trumpets and stringed instruments the writer would consider it so obvious that musical instruments are associated with singing that they don't need to be mentioned. What singer in the entire world thinks of singing without music? Musical instruments are so naturally associated with singing and especially celebrating in song it does not need to be mentioned everytime singing is mentioned.

Following is an example of this basic principal: a man that says, "This is my wife," does not need to say, "I married her," people will automatically suppose they are married, because the two are automatically connected, so it is with singing and musical instruments.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD IS THE FRUIT OF OUR LIPS

- **Hebrews 13:12-16:** So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to

come. ¹⁵Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

The words, "Offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips" is about witness and testifying the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to others, it is not about standing in a beautiful and safe church hall singing songs of worship. The sacrifice is suffering persecution or rejection by others, because we proclaim the name of Jesus.

The sacrifice of praise is also about doing-good and obeying authority. Christians are called to have a continual attitude of thankfulness even though they may be suffering, not because of the suffering, but because they will be delivered from this mortal and corrupt world and resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory. Christ's was willing to lay his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that we could be saved by faith and God's grace and not by works of the law or self-effort these are the things we should be forever thankful for. Obviously, this verse cannot be used to prove anything concerning musical instruments since it is not about musical instruments.

LET THOSE WHO ARE MERRY SING PSALMS

- **James 5:13:** Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

In this context it is more likely that musical instruments are not mentioned because the focus is the individual singing and being happy. By not mentioning musical instruments allows the person who cannot play them to at least know that they can be a pleasing aroma to the Lord without them. It is a big leap to use the verse to say that musical instruments are sinful when used in worship, and a good example of trying to read a preconceived theory into a verse and forcing it to say more than it actually is.

TEN THOUSAND, AND THOUSANDS OF THOUSANDS; SINGING IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 5:8-12:** when he (the Lamb of God) 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. ⁹And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; ¹⁰And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. ¹¹And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; ¹²Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Harps: in these verses comes from the Greek word (kithara) and means a lyre or a harp. The English dictionary says a Harp or lyre is a stringed instrument, steel guitar, lute or dulcimer. This means that there are at least four creatures and twenty-four elders with harps in heaven accompanying multitudes of singers.

If musical instruments were so offensive to God
why would they be used around His Throne?

THE VOICE OF HARPERS HARPING WITH THEIR HARPS IS HEARD IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 14:1-3:** looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.
²And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: ³And they sung a new song before the throne.

Here we have voices in heaven before the throne sounding like harpers with their harps. If musical instruments were sinful to God why would the translators of the Bible liken these heavenly voices to musical instruments?

HARPS OF GOD AND SINGING IS HEARD IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 15:2-3:** I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. ³And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

In these verses all those who have overcome the world and got the victory in Christ are pictured standing before God singing and playing musical instruments. Notice the harps are referred to as being God's. If musical instruments were sinful, why would they be referred to as being God's?

SNIPPETS RELATED TO WORSHIP, SONG AND MUSIC

Some Bible teachers state that Christian's today are to worship God by breaking bread and praying and by teaching, giving and singing. They are correct in all these statements they are all legitimate forms of worship, but sadly the same teachers go a step further and make the claim that to accompany singing with musical instruments in church is a sin.

To support this claim, they use the following two verses:

- Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Ephes. 5:19)
- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16)

Those who believe it is wrong to use musical instruments in church point out that neither of these two verses mention musical instruments and then they take a big leap in human reasoning by stating that it is sin to use musical instruments in church based on the fact they are not mentioned. They say that since these two verses only mention, singing with grace and making melody in your heart, and do not mention musical instruments it is sinful to use musical instruments in church. This is called building a doctrine on the theory of silence, meaning because a thing is not mentioned it must be wrong, but it is extremely dangerous to build doctrines on the theory of absence or silence.

Based on that theory we should not have any of the following:

Church building, because there is no mention in them in the New Testament, we should not have one person giving the message and being the only teacher of the entire congregation since the New Testament teaches when we come together each should bring a Hymn, Psalm, revelation or prophecy, it does not present a picture of one person doing all the teaching, yet this is how the majority of these churches who claim that using musical instruments in church is sinful function. Added to this

on their stand of teaching something is wrong because it is not mentioned they should not be having Sunday schools? Where are they mentioned in the New Testament? And those who are at the head of these churches have their congregations sing happy birthday to a fellow member during the church service where in the Bible does it say we should celebrate a man or woman's secular birthday while we are in church worshipping God, yet most do this.

NOTE: I am not saying any of the above things are wrong I am just pointing out that churches that claim using musical instruments is sin because they are not mentioned in the New Testament should be applying the same principal to all that has been mentioned above. I am (hopefully) shining a spotlight on the spiritual blindness and hypocrisy of those who claim it is a sin to use musical instruments in church, based on the idea that they are not mentioned in the New Testament when they don't apply the same principal to everything else we do allow in church services that are not mentioned in the New Testament.

MUSIC AND EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

It is certainly true that music can be used to manipulate people and change their moods, their thinking and their decisions, but that does not make all music wrong. Many ministers of God use the Bible and the Gospel message for their own selfish gain and distort and twist Scriptures to manipulate their congregations into giving, but all Christians still use the Bible and have faith in it. Everything can be used for good or for bad, it's not the object itself that is good or bad, it is whoever is in control of that object that makes it good or bad, right or wrong. The object itself is not what is sinful; it is what is in the mind of a person using the object that determines if a thing is right or wrong. A simple example of this is money one person can use money to build weapons of mass destruction and use them to kill innocent people, while another person can use the same money to build orphanages and feed the poor, the object (money) is not good or evil, it is how the person with it uses it that makes it good or evil. Even the Bible does not say that money is evil, but it does very clearly say that the love of money is evil.

WORSHIP, JOY AND THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The following two Scriptures show that Joy is a fruit of Spirit.

- The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).
- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (Gal. 5:22).

Since joy is a fruit of Spirit and music brings joy how can it be reasoned if faithful brothers and sisters in Christ are playing respectful music and praising and worshipping God from a true, honest and grateful heart, that it would be offensive to God especially since He created music? Ponder for a moment: would all the angels surrounding the throne of God be telling the immortal invisible Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life to turn away from the fragrance of the praises that are saturated with gratitude and thankfulness that are ascending from the honest hearts of those who love His Son the Lord Jesus Christ before His throne just because they are accompanying their worship and praise with musical instruments?

There is not one verse in the entire Old Testament nor is there one verse in the New Testament that says, "Thou shalt not use musical instruments in church," nor is there one verse in the entire Bible that condemns God's people for worshipping Him with musical instruments, when they have an honest and true heart of gratitude and thankfulness toward Him.

MUSIC IS AN ENORMOUS ATTRACTION TO MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE

Though it is certainly true that music can be used to manipulate people and change their moods, their thinking and their decisions, it is also true that many seeking God begin attending church because of the music. They hear the Good News of the Gospel and many accept Christ. Jesus because music can be used as a powerful tool to manipulate people's emotions and decisions it is not the music that is evil, but the lack of integrity of those in leadership who use music in this way. Not having music could be hindering a lot of people (especially those seeking God) from hearing the Gospel. It is certain some members who belong to Christian organizations that teach using musical instruments is sin, would be leaving their churches because of the organizations legalistic and dogmatic stand against musical instruments. Added to this some who belong to these churches would have Christian friends who do not go to church with them because of the organizations stand against music (this is a shame because there are many other good things and good people in these churches).

SILENCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The following are three possible reasons, musical instruments are not mentioned in the New Testament:

1. It is very likely that if the New Testament did mention that they worshipped with the harp and the lyre, the legalist would say that these are the only two instruments that can be used for worship or that these two instruments must be used every time we worship the Lord.
2. Roman persecution would have made it very difficult for the early church to celebrate and worship with musical instruments.
3. There is an even better reason that the New Testament does not mention musical instruments and it would be the same reason why it does not mention church buildings. Christians in third world countries who cannot afford to build a church or brothers and sisters who do not have the availability of musical instruments know they can still fellowship together in Christ's name and worship God together even if all they have is their voices and a shady tree with chooks and dogs roaming around (this how many in India and similar countries worship the Lord).

It is wrong to make the assumption that it is sinful to use musical instruments because they are not mentioned especially if they are available and they are used to God's glory. Nowhere in the Old or New Testament does God condemn His people for using musical instruments when they are celebrating rejoicing and worshipping before Him with an honest and true heart of gratitude and thanksgiving.

THE FOUNDATIONAL IDEA THAT SUPPORTS THIS THEORY

Now here is the foolishness an irony, many who teach that it is sinful to use musical instruments in church base much of this idea on their belief that the Old Testament has been done away with (including the use of musical instruments), yet they use Old Testament Scriptures to put fear and guilt on their members should any of them consider using musical instruments or question the teaching. The teaching that the Old Testament has been done away with is the foundational idea that supports this theory, but this teaching is flawed since it is not the entire Old Testament that was done away with, but the handwriting of ordinances; the ceremonial customs and religious laws and not the entire Old Testament.

Almost every faithful brother and sister in Christ would agree that there are many things Christians do, that are not specifically mentioned in the Bible, but based on the following verses.

- Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved (1 Cor. 10:31-33).

Perhaps the principal of silence could be expressed in the following way, "If something is not hurting or offending another person, then do that thing to the glory of God. Remember not one verse in the entire Bible condemns God's people for worshipping Him with musical instruments when their heart is honest and true before Him and no verse in the Old or New Testament says, "Thou shalt not use musical instruments in church."

For related topics see the title:

- Worship in Song.
- In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).