

Music In Worship

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Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of faith. All acceptable service to God depends upon a proper understanding and appreciation of this vital principle. Some may wonder what kind of strange people are they who do not use instruments of music in worship. For a number of what some would consider to be good reasons, we would like to use instrumental music as an addition and accompaniment to our singing. Only one thing really prevents its being introduced into our worship. If only we can find the evidence in God's word that He would be pleased to have it, we shall add it. However, if we walk by faith and not by sight, we must refuse to add it.

I. IT MATTERS WITH GOD WHAT WE DO, [Matt. 7:21-23](#); [15:7-9](#).

A. Christ Was Given All Authority, [Matt. 28:18-20](#).

1. He commanded what the apostles taught the disciples to practice, [Matt. 18:18](#)
 - a. Divine authority is established by expressed statement;
 - b. Approved apostolic example;
 - c. Necessary inference (inescapable conclusions).
2. The Bible is a complete and perfect guide, [2 Pet. 1:3](#).
 - a. Furnishes man unto all good works, [2 Tim. 3:16-17](#).
 - b. Cannot change it without a curse, [Gal. 1:6-8](#).
 - c. Cannot go beyond without losing God's fellowship, [2 John 1:9](#).
 - d. Transgression of the law is sin, [I John 3:4](#).

B. We Must Walk By Faith, [2 Cor. 5:7](#).

1. Faith is not superstition nor personal likes, but founded upon Bible, [Rom. 10:17](#).
2. God's ways are not man's ways, [Isa. 55:8-9](#).

C. We Must Understand The Difference Between Aids And Additions.

1. Aids – help to obey the commands of the Lord.

- a. These are not specified, yet they are lawful (authorized) because they fall within the class or kind of that which is commanded.
 - b. Example: Communion plates and cups help to serve the Lord's Supper. They assist in distributing the thing commanded, [Lk. 22:1,18](#).
2. Additions – change that which is commanded.
- a. These do not fall within the same class or kind of that which is specified.
 - b. For example, why would anyone object to using lamb for the Lord's Supper? Though it may be more filling and pleasing to man, it is wrong because it is a change from unleavened bread and fruit of the vine.

II. SINGING IS COMMANDED AND EXEMPLIFIED IN WORSHIP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. Singing Is The Kind Of Music Specified.

1. Matt. 26:30—after the institution of the Lord's Supper.
2. Acts 16:25—Paul and Silas in prison.
3. Rom. 15:9—David's prophecy of the Gentiles.
4. I Cor. 14:15—singing with the spirit and understanding.
5. Eph. 5:19—singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.
6. Col. 3:16—singing with grace in your hearts.
7. Heb. 2:12—in the midst of the church will I sing thy praise.
8. Heb. 13:15—the sacrifice of praise ... the fruit of our lips.
9. James 5:13—Is any merry? Let him sing praises.

B. Which Scripture Even Allows Us To Use Instrumental Music?

1. Instead of asking why do you not use instrumental music in worship, one should raise the question of "What scripture authorizes it?"
2. Singing and playing are two different kinds of music. This can be illustrated by asking one to sing, "Nearer My God To Thee" and another to play it.
3. Song books are authorized as aids because they help one to obey the command to sing. In no way do they change the kind of music made. But an instrument is an addition for it changes what is commanded.

III. COMMON REASONS OFFERED TO JUSTIFY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN

WORSHIP.

A. The Bible Doesn't Say "Not" To Use It!

1. This is a poor justification. By the same logic one could add lamb to the Lord's Supper.
2. God punished those who did other than what was commanded, [Lev. 10:1-2](#).
3. The fact something is not specifically forbidden does not give us the authority to do as we please. For example, Moses did not specifically forbid priests to come of the tribe of Judah, but Christ could not be a priest on earth because He was from this tribe (cf. [Heb. 7:14](#)). Another tribe (Levi) had been specifically commanded. Likewise, singing is specifically commanded, and God "spake nothing" about any change or addition to this kind of music.

B. David Used Instrumental Music In Worship.

1. Under the Law of Moses, David used them, [2 Chron. 29:25](#); Psalm 150.
 - a. Yet, no one wants to add lamb to the Lord's Supper on the basis that David ate of it during the Passover Feast.
 - b. Nor do they want to offer bulls and goats for sacrifices;
 - c. Nor do they use him as an example to justify many wives, etc.
2. Why? The Law of Moses was abolished at the cross, [Col. 2:14](#).
 - a. The Law served as a schoolmaster, but we are no longer under it, [Gal. 3:23-25](#).
 - b. Christ is dead in vain if justified by it, [Gal. 2:21](#); [5:4](#).

C. Harps Are Mentioned In [Revelation 5:8;14:1-2;15:1-2](#).

1. Observe "who" and "where"!
 - a. Heaven was the place, [Rev. 4:1](#)
 - b. Four beasts and twenty-four elders were the "who" in [Rev 5:8](#) and 144,000 were the only ones who could learn the song in [Rev. 14:1-2](#).
2. Will we accept the position that whatever is in heaven we should have on the earth? What about angels, golden bowls, golden censer, burning incense?
3. Rev. 15:2—the fact they were standing on a sea of glass indicates it is figurative language. If so, could not the harps be also?

D. The Greek Word "Psallo" (Making Melody) In [Eph. 5:19](#) Means To Play.

1. The root meaning of this word is to pull, rub, strike, pluck, or vibrate.
 - a. A carpenter "psalloses" a line when he lets it go to chalk.
 - b. One would "psallo" a man's beard if he pulled it.
2. Forty-seven scholars who translated the King James Version and 101 who translated the American Standard Version of the N.T. gave the meaning of this word all five times it appears the idea of "sing." Were all these wrong? (It appears in [Rom. 15:9](#); twice in [I Cor. 14:15](#); [James 5:13](#); [Eph. 5:19](#)).
3. If it means "play an instrument," then all of us need to be equipped with a hand organ or some other instrument. Actually this passage is strong proof of the purpose singing is commanded. The instrument is the heart! God wants this kind of worship – "from the heart."

IV. PLEASE UNDERSTAND OUR ACTION IS OUT OF CONVICTION.

A. This Objection Has Not Been Supported By Secular History, Though It Could Be.

1. Encyclopedias, church histories both testify that the early disciples did not use instrumental music in their worship, although it was available to them and used in the temple worship by Jews.
2. Instrumental music was first introduced into Christian worship in 660 A.D. by Vitalian, the Roman Catholic Pope, but it was not generally used till later.
3. Many renowned denominational leaders were opposed to it. Men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Charles Spurgeon are on record against its use.
 - a. John Wesley, when asked his opinion of instrumental music being introduced into the chapels of Methodists, said, "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen."
 - b. Adam Clarke, in his commentary written in 1823 added to Wesley's words, "I say the same, though I think the expense of purchase had better be spared." (Clarke's notes on [Amos 6:5](#).)

B. This Objection Is Not Because We Do Not Like The Sound Of Instrumental Music.

1. Many Christians have instruments and play them for secular entertainment.

2. But we understand that what pleases man is not necessarily what pleases God.

C. This Objection Is Based On Where Is The Scripture?
It does matter to God what we do! [Matt. 15:7-9](#);
[Matt. 7:21-23](#).

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