

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Music is one of the great arts which gratifies an esthetic desire in man. Someone has said, "Music has the power to lift the veil and let the spirit look and listen; it marks a dividing line between beasts and men; it compels mankind to put away selfishness, greed, and hate, and to discover the pathway to the soul." Singing as one type of music is the one great art by which man is linked with eternity since Job says, "The morning stars sang together for joy" before the creation of the world. John, in the book of Revelation, wrote of the 140,000 singing praises to the Lamb of God in heaven.

GOD PLACED MUSIC IN WORSHIP

It is a small wonder that in both the Hebraic and Christian traditions music has a very definite place in the worship of God. The Psalms of David make up the longest book of the Bible. He is known as the "sweet singer of Israel." In the book of Matthew, singing is mentioned in connection with the institution of the Lord's supper in the upper room (Matt. 26:26-30). One night about midnight in Philippi the intrepid preachers, Paul and Silas, were singing in prison with their feet and hands bound. Later their jailor decided he wanted the brand of religion which enabled its adherents to sing after being cruelly scourged and placed in a dungeon (Acts 16:25-34). The same Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 5:19, commanded Christians to sing and make melody in their heart to

the Lord.

That music has an important part in the worship of Almighty God in the Christian age, no informed person would deny. However, there is a difference of opinion as to the *kind of music* which is pleasing to God for worship. We might ask the larger question, "What kind of worship is pleasing to God," since music is but one item of worship? In every age, man's deviation from God's order has been due to the fact that man sought to please himself and not God. Paganism and idolatry of every description is a result of man's trying to please a god fashioned in his own image — and thus of trying to please himself. Cain was the first to try this and his worship was rejected. John Milton once said, "True religion is the true worship and service of God learned and believed from the word of God only. No man or angel can know how God would be worshipped and served unless God reveal it; he hath revealed and taught it to us in the holy scriptures by inspired ministers, and in the gospel by his own Son and his apostles, with strictest command to reject all other traditions whatsoever."

In order to appreciate the kind of music we should have in Christian worship, we must understand that it is *music as worship and not music as an art* we are thinking about primarily. Music for its esthetic value is to be judged just like any other art, namely, whether it is pleasing or displeasing to the human senses. But music as worship, as is true of everything else used as worship to God,

must be pleasing to God first — then to men. In Christianity *"we walk by faith, not by sight"* (II Cor. 5:7), and *"without faith it is impossible to please Him"* (Heb 11:6). In Christianity, God is set forth as the One to be pleased — not the worshipper. The Lordship of Jesus Christ in every department of our thinking and acting is basic to our faith.

FOUR KINDS OF WORSHIP IN NEW TESTAMENT

Only four kinds of worship are mentioned in the New Testament — four and only four. Let us examine them.

1) **Vain Worship.** Jesus said in Matt. 15:9, *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* "Vain" means "empty", "without meaning." The Pharisees were charging the disciples with violating the law of Moses by not washing their hands before eating when the ceremonial act of washing hands was but one of the traditions of the Jews — a precept of man. Jesus not only condemns them for so doing but says that anything in worship taught as doctrine that comes from the commandments of men is worthless. Lovers of God today must therefore studiously and prayerfully avoid offering, as worship to God, that which has no higher authority than the precepts of men, even though there may be nothing wrong with the act itself (such as

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Instrumental Music...



Editorial...

THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP IS SINFUL

Garland M. Robinson

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23). The injunction of II Cor. 5:7 is that we “walk by faith, not by sight.” Since faith comes by hearing God’s word (Rom. 10:17), we therefore live according to his word and not what may appear right in our own eyes (Jer. 10:23). Many ways may seem right to men, but they are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12). We are to walk “in the light” of God’s word (I John 1:7). When we step out of God’s searchlight of truth, we place ourselves outside of God’s approval. Unless we live according to his word (walking by faith), we are not pleasing to him and are guilty of sin. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2) and separation from God leads to eternal torment (Matt. 25:46). Therefore, “whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all **in the name of the Lord Jesus**” (Col. 3:16). To do a thing in his name simply means to do it by his authority or command.

In respect to mechanical instruments of music being used in worship to God, the New Testament does not give any authority for it. It is NOT walking by faith to employ its use and if we do not walk by faith, we sin against God. Notice these plain facts about it. CHRIST never **COMMAND-ED** it, the HOLY SPIRIT never **AUTHORIZED** it, no APOSTLE ever **SANCTIONED** it, no NEW TESTAMENT writer ever **ENDORSED** it, and no NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ever **EMPLOYED** it! The use of it is **SIN!!** It is a sin because we cannot use it in faith and obedience to God.

Mechanical instrumental music is a SIN because:

It rejects New Testament authority. Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18) and he did not instruct the apostles to use it. The Holy Spirit led the apostles into all truth (John 16:13) and he did not lead them to use it. God tells us what he

wants and when we reject what he says we reject his salvation, for salvation only comes to those who obey him (Heb. 5:9).

It goes beyond that which is written. We are not to think above that which is written (I Cor. 4:6). We must not add to or take away from God’s word (Rev. 22:18-19). We must not go beyond the doctrine of Christ, for if we do so we no longer have fellowship with God and Christ (II John 9-11). To teach and practice another gospel than what God has given is to invoke the wrath of God upon us (Gal. 1:6-9).

It violates scriptural worship. Our worship must be in “spirit and truth” (John 4:24). To worship in truth is to worship according to the truth. God’s word is truth (John 17:17); hence, we must worship according to the instructions of the New Testament. When something other than the human voice is employed, we violate God’s specified plan of worship and no longer worship according to the truth.

It causes division. God hates division and those who cause it (Prov. 6:19). Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20-21). The apostles taught and commanded unity (I Cor. 1:10). Those who cause division are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17). Who is causing division, the one who introduces its use or the one who opposes its use? It is not difficult to figure out who has violated God’s instructions. The one who adds to what God commanded is the one who causes division, not those who contend for what God authorizes!

The use of mechanical instruments of music is an innovation of man that is totally without Bible authority and constitutes **VAIN WORSHIP**. Vain worship brings the curse of God upon it (Matt. 15:9). It is a plant God has not planted and will be rooted up (Matt. 15:13).

Leroy Brownlow gives four logical arguments as to why mechanical

instruments of music cannot be used in worship to God. (**Why I Am A Member of Church of Christ**, pp.178-179)

Argument One:

(1) Every Scripture is given that the man of God may be furnished unto every good work (II Tim. 3:16-17).

(2) No Scripture authorizes instrumental music in the worship today (cannot be found).

(3) Therefore, instrumental music in the worship today is not a good work.

Argument Two:

(1) It is a violation of the Lord’s will to go beyond the things which are written (I Cor. 4:6).

(2) Musical instruments in New Testament worship have not been written (cannot be found).

(3) Therefore, those who use musical instruments in the worship today violate the Lord’s will.

Argument Three:

(1) “So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

(2) The word of Christ does not give us musical instruments in the worship (cannot be found).

(3) Therefore, instrumental music in the worship is not an act of faith.

Argument Four:

(1) God has given us all that pertains to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3).

(2) What God has given does not mention instrumental music in New Testament worship (cannot be found).

(3) Therefore, instrumental music in the worship today does not pertain unto life and godliness.

A number of years ago I was talking to Jeff Walling and asked him if he believed it was a sin to use mechanical instruments of music. He tried to get around the question the first three or four times I asked him. But, I listened carefully and patiently and he never answered the question. So, I would ask it again. Finally, in frustration, he replied, No, I don’t believe it’s a sin because the Bible does not say it is a sin.

It’s a simple question. Instrumental music is either a sin or it is not a sin. If it is not a sin, then I am sinning by refusing its use. If, on the other hand, it is sinful to use it, then those who use it and/or allow its use are sinning.

Where do YOU stand?

Instrumental Music...

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washing hands), such is vain worship.

2) **Ignorant Worship.** In Acts 17:22-23 we read, *“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”*

These people were worshipping, but, due to a lack of knowledge, they were worshipping ignorantly. Only God can judge one who is worshipping Him ignorantly (through no fault of his own), but if one is “willfully ignorant,” then there is no excuse. *“He that turneth away his ear from the hearing of the law, even his prayer is an abomination”* (Prov. 28:9). The ignorant worship of the Athenians was no longer acceptable because Paul said, *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; (overlooked) but now commandeth all men every where to repent”* (Acts 17:30).

3) **Will worship** is described in Colossians 2:20-23. *“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”* The expression “will worship” comes from a single original word which signifies that which has its origin in the will of men. It might even indicate the greatest determination to be religious, but when not governed by the humble desire to learn and do exactly as God has decreed, it becomes utterly unacceptable.

4) **True worship.** In John 4:24, we read *“God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”* To be “in spirit” we must be conscientious and sincere. That rules out hypocrisy and meaningless forms. To be “in truth” we must do as the word of truth directs. If we do what the Word says

to do, but in a grudgingly or hypocritical manner, it is unacceptable to God. If we are deeply sincere, but fail to worship as God’s word directs, that is also unacceptable. Jesus said in John 17:17, *“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.”* Thus, for our worship to be acceptable to God, we must have the right spirit and we must worship as the word of truth teaches — no more and no less.

MUST GOD SAY “NOT DO IT” FOR A THING TO BE WRONG?

“We walk by faith and not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7) is the same principle as true worship restated. In Romans 10:17 we read, *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”* To do a matter “in faith” we must have a “thus sayeth the Lord.” But many have left the main line of faith in their worship and have gone off on the bypaths of opinion. Some believe that a thing is all right for worship unless explicitly forbidden. The Bible states in II John 9, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”*

Suppose I were to bring an animal sacrifice to church next Sunday. The preacher would say “hold on, that is not authorized in Christianity. You don’t have God’s approval in offering that as worship.” He would be exactly right, even though the New Testament does not say you cannot offer animal sacrifices.

Why do we have the Lord’s supper as worship? Because of tradition? No, its because Jesus said, “this do in remembrance of me.” Have you ever stopped to think why we have the fruit of the vine on the Lord’s table instead of sweet milk? Who started it? The Lord Jesus did in Matthew 26. He specified the kind of beverage to be used and he didn’t say, “Thou shalt not use sweet milk.” But all agree to use it would be to go beyond the teaching of Christ — beyond faith into opinion. This should throw light on the non-use of instrumental music in Christian worship. Did God specify music? Yes. Did he specify a particular kind? Yes. He specified vocal music in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16.

MUSIC IN OLD TESTAMENT WORSHIP

Some say, “Since David used instrumental music to praise God, isn’t that sufficient authority for our doing so today?” If so, on the same basis we could bring in the *dance* as an item of worship because David said, *“Praise Him with psaltery and harp, praise Him with timbel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe”* (Psalm 150:3,4).

Is it acceptable to pick out of Jewish worship just what we want, leaving the rest, or rather should it not be to find out what God has seen fit to continue and sanction for Christian worship? *Prayer* was a part of Jewish worship, as was the *burning of incense and animal sacrifice*. Christians today rightly continue prayer as an act of Christian worship and reject the burning of incense and animal sacrifice on the principle that we are now living under the law of Christ in which prayer is commanded and exemplified. Burning incense and animal sacrifice are not sanctioned in Christian worship, and the New Testament is just as silent on the use of instruments of music in worship.

Under the Old Testament law were many things not in God’s original plan, nor were they continued in the New Testament. Hebrews 7:19 says the Ten Commandments and the entire law of Moses made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did. That better hope is Jesus Christ and the New Testament whereby we draw nigh unto God.

Christians are not under Old Testament law which permitted instruments of music. We’re under a new law. Regarding the Old Law, we learn from Colossians 2:14: *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”*

God says that those who try to justify something today because it was in the Law of Moses, though not in the New Testament, are fallen from grace. *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). Hence, if we try to justify any religious practice today by the Old Testament law, when Christ

has not authorized it in His new law, it becomes a certain way to fall from grace. Those who say it is wrong to eat pork today, base their conclusion on the law of Moses, not the law of Christ. Paul says these are fallen from grace. Those who would put us back under the seventh day Sabbath law today, the Holy Spirit says, are fallen from grace, and he warns: *“Let no man judge you...in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a sabbath day, which is a shadow of things to come”* (Col. 2:17).

If we rightly divide the Word of Truth, we must understand that the Old Testament Law (that is, the Mosaic law, including the Ten Commandments) *“...was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster”* (Gal. 3:24-25).

The beautiful lesson of the Transfiguration teaches us that Christ is the only begotten son of God and to “hear him.” We do not practice circumcision as a religious rite because we are to hear Christ, not Moses. We do not use mechanical instruments of music in worship because we are to hear Christ, not David. David had eight wives, danced in worship, did not observe the Lord’s supper, and did not pray in the name of Jesus — yet he was living up to the demands of the Law of Moses in so doing. However, if we try to take him as an example in worship by bringing in instruments of music and other shadows of the law, we are hearing Moses, not Christ; and for so doing we will be severed from Christ and ultimately lost.

Moses, with all his moral excellence, unfeigned piety, and legislative dignity, fell short of Canaan. All who cleave to him or his law today will come short of the heavenly rest. His mortal remains were buried by the Almighty in secret, and yet we will not suffer his ashes to rest in peace! He came down from heaven to give place to the Messiah, to lay down His commission at his feet; and we will not accept it! (cf. Matt. 17). Strange infatuation! Equally strange is the infatuation which will cause one to drag David’s instruments of music into Christian worship, and leave off his animal sacrifices, completely forgetting that Christ fulfilled the law. God said, *“He takes away the first*

that he might establish the second” (Heb. 10:9), and, *“...ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God”* (Rom. 7:4).

We worship according to the risen Lord, not the entombed David or Moses. When we sing in worship we give honor to Christ; when we play instruments in worship we give honor to the traditions and commandments of men.

MUSIC IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Let us now turn to the New Testament to see what Christ, our law-giver has said on music in worship. Since God said, “Hear him,” anything Christ or His inspired apostles authorize in Christian worship, we must use. Anything without authority in the New Testament for Christian worship must be excluded from our worship because of the silence of the Scriptures on that item. Following, are all of the New Testament Scriptures on music in worship. Open your Bible and read them candidly and prayerfully.

“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26).

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25).

“Sing unto thy name” (Rom. 15:9).

“...I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (I Cor. 14:15).

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 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)

“...In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee” (Heb. 2:12).

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (James 5:13).

In these eight passages, the *kind of music* God specified is vocal music. Whatever might be said in favor of instrumental music, no one doubts

that we are worshipping God “in truth” by simply “singing and making melody in our hearts” to God. In so doing we are allowing the Scriptures to “furnish us completely unto every good work” (II Tim. 3:16,17) and are “not going beyond the things which are written (I Cor. 4:6). The voice of inspired writers says one is walking in truth by singing in worship and leaving off the instrument. The early church fathers testify that in so doing we are adhering to the kind of music the church, for several hundred years, practiced. Religious reformers like Luther, Calvin, and Wesley bear witness that singing is the kind of worship prescribed in the law of Christ. Today, when many like to think they are “liberal” in religious thinking, those who use mechanical instruments of music in worship must admit that users of vocal music alone occupy New Testament ground in this respect, and are safe, to say the least.

In Colossians 3:17 we read, *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”* Singing, or vocal music, exalts the human voice, the instrument God made and Christ authorized for worship. This can be done “in the name of Jesus” or by His authority. Instrumental music exalts a machine, a creation of man, in an attempt to worship our Creator. This is the basic fault of idolatry which continually kept the Jews in difficulties. In the New Testament, vocal music is by the authority of Christ. Since it nowhere authorizes mechanical music, such must be by the authority of men.

ORIGIN OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

In order to find out where instrumental music originated in Christian worship, we must go to history outside the Bible since the practice started hundreds of years after the writing of the Bible had been completed.

Here are two quotations from reputable encyclopedias on Church Music:

The American Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, page 688, “Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe about 670; but the earliest

trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of Franks in 755." *Chambers Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7, page 112, says: "The organ is said to have been introduced into church music by Pope Vitalian in 666 A.D. Thus historically and scripturally, instrumental music in Christian worship represents a departure from the faith and practice of the New Testament church."

CONCLUSION

We need to remember that music in Christian worship is not for the purpose of entertaining, but for teaching and exalting. We should have no trouble seeing why God demanded vocal music and left out instrumental music.

The human voice is capable of doing everything God commands us to do as music in worship, whereas the instrument is incapable of doing anything required by music in Christian worship except make melody, and it does not do that in the right place — the human heart (cf. Col. 3:16; Gal. 5:19). Which is the right course? To do the thing which all admit fulfills the Scriptural requirements and pleases God or the thing that does not fulfill the Scriptural requirements and merely pleases man?

Suppose one were to take a pencil and paper and draw a line down the center of a blank page and label the column on the left Commandments of God and label the column on the right Commandments of Men. Now, with the Word of God as the guide, classify a dozen or so things which are practiced in religion today. Where would *preaching* be placed? Under the Commandments of God. How do we know? Because this is commanded in II Timothy 4:2. What about *prayer*? Taking the *Lord's Supper*? *Baptism*? *Feeding the poor*? Any Bible student can readily find book, chapter and verse for such practices, proving that they are commandments of God. But what about *counting beads* in worship? That would have to go under commandments of men. It is unheard of (not authorized) in the New Testament. What about *holy water* or *worshipping images*? These are mere command-

ments of men and constitute vain worship. In all frankness, where would we have to place *instruments of music*? Since there is no command, example or implication of their use anywhere in the New Testament, we would be obliged to place it under the heading of Commandments of Men. It was the Lord Jesus Christ who said, "*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matt. 15:9).

It was not an oversight on the part of God that he left instrumental music out of Christian worship. God makes no mistakes. Why He left it out is none of my business. The fact is, He left it out.

In II Peter 1:3, we read, "*...his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.*" Instrumental music doesn't pertain to life and godliness, else it would have been included in the things written.

In II John 9, we read, "*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*" To preach the word, pray, or sing is to abide in the teaching of Christ, but to play an instrument in worship is to "go onward and abide not in the Teaching of Christ," and thus in that one thing, the beloved apostle John says God is not with us.

In Romans 10:17 we read that faith comes by hearing the word of God and "*we walk by faith, not by sight*" (II Cor. 5:7). By using the instrument in worship, it cannot be said that we are walking by faith, since the word of God doesn't authorize it. Casting aside all prejudice, can't we honestly say that the reason churches have instrumental music today in worship is because of tradition and a desire to do what "we like" rather than what the Lord commands? King Saul was rejected as king because he attempted to do, as service to God, what he had not commanded (cf. I Sam. 15). Nadab and Abihu were destroyed for offering strange fire — fire which God had not commanded (Lev. 10:1-2). In the light of such examples, can we afford to tamper with Christian worship?

Savonarola said when he preached the doctrines of human

invention he pleased an impatient and fickle people but when he turned to the Bible, he shook men's souls. Surely it is safe and right in time and in eternity to worship just as it is written in God's Word — without addition or subtraction. For these reasons churches of Christ throughout the world do not use mechanical instruments of music in worship and plead with those who love the Bible to return to apostolic practice in Christian worship.

—*Author unknown, edited by Garland Robinson*

CONTRIBUTIONS

Pete Holmes.....	\$20
John F. Bessire.....	\$20
Lorene Wilson.....	\$50
Robert & Lucy Meikle.....	\$12
Baleri & Darrell Cunningham.....	\$200
M/M John H. Brown.....	\$25
Murel & Pat Jones.....	\$50
Everett D. Poteet.....	\$25
Melvin & Judy Harper.....	\$50
Marie Barrett.....	\$20
Baker church of Christ, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$350
Anonymous.....	\$200
Ruby York.....	\$148
Joseph C. Britt, Jr.....	\$100
Saks church of Christ, Anniston, AL.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$50
Mrs. Ida E Horn.....	\$30
Anonymous.....	\$20
Robert M. Price.....	\$200
Central church of Christ, Denison, TX.....	\$20
Ernest & Marvene Snow.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$25
Doris Neal.....	\$40
Bettye Blankenship.....	\$100
Anthony Grant.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$200
Bobby & Mary Lawrence.....	\$100
Johnnie Tittle.....	\$25
Ronnie & Pam Clark.....	\$20
Sue Winningham.....	\$15
William F. Williams.....	\$25
Louise Welch.....	\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist.....	\$25
Lyndell & Dana Henson.....	\$20
Jackson St. church of Christ, Alexandria, LA.....	\$100
Baker church of Christ, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Bobbie J. Wheeler.....	\$100
David & Lisa Horwath.....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$25
Church of Christ River Road, Muscle Shoals, AL.....	\$200
John H. Brown.....	\$25
Glenis Mayo (in memory of Robert Dutton).....	\$25
Jim & Rosalyn Boyd (in memory of Joe B. Ware).....	\$50
Ruby York.....	\$145
John & Oleta Trigg.....	\$25
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SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP TO GOD

Roger D. Campbell

Some time ago, I was asked some questions about the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. In the past I have written articles and a tract on this subject. Some of that material is available on the internet. From the sound of the inquirer's letter, it appears that somewhere he has read something that I wrote about instrumental music. Because people often ask why the Lord's church does not use instrumental music in worship, and because those who ask about it often try to present arguments in favor of such a practice, I am sharing below this person's questions and my answers. [For convenience, I numbered the questions in my response].

#1: *"Are the instruments of worship used in the Old Testament sinful if used in praise and worship? (Hymns and songs)"*

Answer: II Chronicles 29:25 seems to indicate that cymbals, psalteries, and harps were a part of the worship of the Old Testament era, and they were used by the commandment of the Lord. If something was authorized as part of Old Testament worship, does that prove that it is also authorized as part of the worship of the New Testament church? Of course the answer is No. We must do all things by the authority of Jesus (Matt. 28:18,20; Col. 3:17). We must abide in Jesus' teaching, not the teaching of the Old Testament era (II John 9). Since the New Testament gives no authority to use any mechanical instruments of music in worship to God, including those that were used in the Old Testament era, to use them in the worship of the New Testament church is to act without divine approval.

#2: *"The Bible says there will be harps and lutes in Heaven. What makes them wrong if used in a service on earth?"*

Answer: We have to remember that the Book of Revelation is a book of symbols. In Revelation 5:8 we read, "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 [incense, NKJV], which are the prayers of saints."

Among other things, this verse mentions "the Lamb," "harps," and "incense." Where were these items seen? Answer: Wherever "the throne" was (5:6). Where was the throne? Answer: "...a throne was set in heaven" (4:2). I mention these facts simply to point out that I agree that the Lamb, harps, and incense were seen in heaven.

Four brief thoughts come to mind in answer to this question.

First, if "harps" means literal harps in Revelation 5:8, then "Lamb" should also mean a literal lamb with wool and four legs — in heaven. Are we ready to accept such an idea?!

Second, verse 8 explains or interprets the odours/incense to be "the prayers of the saints." What was it that John saw? He saw vials full of incense. But, as the text indicates, the incense meant (symbolizes) the prayers of the saints. Again, if "odours/incense" is a symbol of something else, and "Lamb" is a symbol of the Christ, then the word "harps," which is located in the text between "Lamb" and "incense," would also be a symbol of something else. What the harps symbolize is not indicated in the text.

Third, heaven is portrayed in the New Testament as a place where corruptible things would be out of place (I Cor. 15:50-54). Since a literal lamb, literal harps, and literal incense are corruptible, then these literal objects/things would have no place in heaven, which is an incorruptible, spiritual environment.

Fourth, what God authorizes for worship to Him in the assembly of His church is not based on what righteous people did in the days before the giving of the New Testament, nor is the worship of the New Testament church based on what might be in heaven in the future. The church's worship is to be founded in the action that the New Testament of Jesus authorizes for

God's children on the earth.

#3: *"You have an interesting perspective about using cake in worship. Bread was used in Old Testament worship and feasts. (shewbread, etc.). Cake was not. Harps and lutes were used in the Old Testament in worship. Pianos and drums were not. (And were not mentioned.) So as the same for bread we can use in a proper service harps and lutes."*

Answer: If I properly follow your reasoning, it sounds as if you are saying that cake was not used in Old Testament worship, so using cake today in worship would be wrong. But, since bread was used in the Old Testament (shewbread), then we can use bread in worship in the New Testament era. And, the Old Testament does not mention pianos and drums, so they would not be acceptable today, but since the Old Testament does mention harps and lutes, using them would be okay today. I am not trying to put words in your mouth, just trying to express what I perceive to be the reasoning that you are setting forth.

The truth is, use of the bread in the Lord's supper (I Cor. 11:23,24) is authorized (and required) in New Testament worship, but not because it was somehow connected to Old Testament worship. Bread is authorized for New Testament worship because Jesus used and authorized it. As I noted above, the worship of the New Testament church must be founded on and authorized by the teaching of the New Testament, and it has nothing to do with what was done in the Old Testament era, including the use of harps, animal sacrifices, Feast of Tabernacles, and other matters. Jesus abolished the Old Testament law and nailed it to His cross (Eph. 2:14,15; Col. 2:14). Thus, we are not under the teaching of the Old Law. Its teaching is no longer in effect.

#4: *"I agree in today's world there is a lot of foolishness in the church and we should be careful in every step, but you should not assume harps and lutes were not used in Christian worship. I'm sure people combed their hair in the*

Old and New Testament before worship. Since it's not mentioned, should we not comb ours also before going to service? Ties are worn at services, this was not mentioned in the New Testament worship and for a fact not even used during that time. Why does the Church of Christ allow them? If you did not, I could understand the first objection. As always, I praise you being in the service of our Lord and do not want you in any way to think these questions are presented in a harsh way. I find a vast amount of your writings on the Bible very inspiring."

Answer: I certainly agree with you that there is "a lot of foolishness" going on in the religious realm in our time. Following the theories and commands of men turns people from the truth (Titus 1:14) and makes worship vain (Mark 7:7).

You stated that I assume that harps and lutes were not used in Christian worship. I try not to assume anything when it comes to the matter of worship. We are duty-bound to do only those things that the Lord authorizes in the New Testament (Col. 3:17). We are commanded to "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). The use of lutes and harps in the worship of the New Testament church is not speaking as the oracles of God. The "silence" of the scriptures (that is, things that the New Testament does not mention) does not provide authority or justification for any action in worship. Again, the charge to speak (and act) according to the oracles of God should cause us to do things based on what the Bible *does* say, not based on what it *does not* say.

In the matters of combing hair and wearing ties, those are in the area of personal grooming, and do not constitute acts of worship. The New Testament speaks about personal grooming in I Timothy 2:9, where it is written, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety..." Christians are also told to demonstrate "honest conversation" ["honorable conduct," NKJV] (I Peter 2:12). This principle would include the need for saints to conduct themselves, even in the realm of personal grooming and personal hygiene, in a presentable manner and in such a way that others would not be "turned off" by what we do. Again, there is a distinction between the acts of worship of the church and the personal grooming/appearance of

those that engage in the worship.

I hope my response has been helpful. Thanks for your inquiry.

How Many Members Of The Church Are Opposed To Mechanical Instruments of Music In Worship?

I have no idea what percentage of the members of the Lord's church are convinced it is unscriptural to worship God in song with the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music. There are indicators which point to the reality that many brothers and sisters in the Christ do not think that it is wrong to use them in worship to the Lord. That is tragic indeed, because one's attitude toward the use of them

in worship reveals one's attitude toward the authority of the Bible. And, one's attitude toward the authority of the Bible is an indication of one's attitude toward the Lord Himself.

Consider these thoughts: "It is sinful to use instrumental music in Christian worship because: It is utterly without New Testament sanction since Christ did not authorize it, no apostle commanded it, no inspired writer justified it, and no apostolic church practiced it. Children of God are to walk by faith, which comes from hearing God's word. It is not possible to use instrumental music 'by faith' since the New Testament does not command it (II Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17)"

[Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers: Open Forum, Vol. I* (Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman College, 1976), p.28]



IS THERE A PATTERN FOR THE KIND OF MUSIC TO BE USED IN WORSHIP?

Garland M. Robinson

Yes, there is a pattern for the "kind of music" to be used in worship to God. This pattern is easily found in the New Testament, though many try to make it out to be very difficult, even to the extent to claim there is no pattern. But, for one to say there is no pattern, isn't that a pattern itself? The point would be that it is a pattern that there is no pattern? Does this sound ridiculous? You're right!

Many go to great lengths to circumvent plain passages of scripture. All one has to do is simply read the New Testament to see what Christians did in the first century. Every verse that mentions anything about their worship in song ALWAYS involves VOCAL MUSIC. There is a total absence of mechanical instruments of music in first century worship. Notice these verses: "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and making melody in your heart to the Lord*" (Ephesians 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*" (Colossians 3:16). You may also compare I Corinthians 14:15, Hebrews 2:12 and James 5:13.

What is the Lord's pattern concerning the KIND OF MUSIC He desires in worship? It is VOCAL MUSIC. Jesus never used or commanded mechanical instruments of music to be used in worship. The Holy Spirit never commanded their use. The apostles never used or commanded them. The first century church never used them. They were not introduced until hundreds of years after the time of the apostles. There is no command, example or implication of their use anywhere in the worship of the church! They are the invention and introduction of man, not God. They are an addition to the Bible which is condemned in Revelation 22:18.

The Lord's pattern of music is SINGING PSALMS, HYMNS and SPIRITUAL SONGS with the fruit of our lips from our heart!

Are you following the New Testament pattern or are you following man's tradition and doctrine? I prefer to follow God, not man. What about you?



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"It's been a while since I've written or sent a little help in keeping STOP coming to me. I just can't hardly wait for the booklet every month. I enjoy it so much. I receive 5 or 6 bulletins regular from AL, MO, AR and TN. Yours and the one from West Plains, MO are my favorite ones. Brother Ivie Powell is the preacher in West Plains. Keep the good news coming" **...Addie Bell Long, Harrisburg, AR.** "I would appreciate having the paper mailed to me monthly, also a friend would like to receive it. My son, visiting a church in Kansas, brought some to me. Thank you" **...Ida E. Horn, Alton, IL.** "I just read with great interest, Rusty Stark's article, "Save Us From Arrogant Preachers" (Nov/06). Brother Stark is right about one thing, people do not like to be corrected. This is especially true of preachers. I have run into this problem more than a few times in my 30+ years in the Lord's church. Keep up the good work and may God continue to bless your good works. Please add me to your mailing list" **...James Lockwood, Hillsdale, MI.** "We continue to receive the STOP publication. Enclosed is a check to help with the expense of publication. It is encouraging to read the articles in each publication. It is very evident that Satan is still at work among God's people. There are many congregations that are like Israel who wanted to be like the neighboring nations. Taking a little from them and adding it to what God required of them is what finally caused God to give them up. We are thankful that not everyone is following that same path. We as ministers must 'preach the word' without compromise. Elders must always stand for the truth and be on guard not only from without, but from within. Christians must support the truth and demand such from those who lead their congregations. We will all be held accountable. We pray that your work will continue to follow the old paths and encourage others to do the same. God bless" **...J. T. Morgan, Florence, MS.** "You fellows do a fine job in the soundness of your paper. We are so very appreciative of that clearness and soundness of *Seek The Old Paths*. God bless all the work and workers" **...Don & Weda White, Purcell, OK.** "Can I UNSUBSCRIBE? Dear me, I have been receiving this publication for years. It was indeed funny and amusing to read at first but enough is enough. It's a waste to send it to me and its also a waste of paper in itself. Thank you very very much" **...Unknown.** [NOTE: No name was given with this note. I can't take you off if I don't know your name, — editor]. "I continue to appreciate the publication. Continue the good work" **...Lenard Hogan, Hornbeak, TN.** "Would you please add our family to your mailing list to receive your monthly publication? Thank you very much" **...Linda Ball, Pulaski, TN.** "Please add my name to the mailing list. Thank you" **...Billie Hall, Oxford, MS.** "We have been receiving *Seek The Old Paths* for several years. It is always good to read the articles by sound brethren. I appreciate the work you do through this paper and the sound position that you take. I have been preaching the gospel for a little over fifty one years. Due to bad health, I had to retire from full time preaching in October 2006. However, I am still able to fill in when preachers have to be away, hold meetings, teach in VBS, etc. It is good to still be able to do that. Thank you for all you do in the cause of our Lord. We pray His blessings on you and your family" **...Horace L. Jacobs, Lynchburg, TN.** "I receive *Seek The Old Paths* through the mail and really enjoy reading it. Thanks again for your newsletter!" **...Stephen Merritt, Nashville, TN.** "Refused. Return to sender. Do not read this and do not send any more" **...Nellie Honeycutt, Clinton, NC.** "Will you please add me to your mailing list. I have seen a copy and agree with the stand you take concerning the Scriptures. Thanks a lot" **...Joe D. Powell, Newport, MI.** "Thank you for sending us STOP. We appreciate the paper very much" **...Washington St. Church of Christ, Fairview, WV.** "Thanks" **...Bill Johnson, Claremore, OK.** "Thanks for all the good articles over the last few years. May God continue to bless you in the coming years" **...Pete Holmes, St. Clair Shores, MI.** "Refused" **...John Trotter, Bidwell, OH.** "May I please be added to your free subscription list for *Seek The Old Paths*? Thanks so much" **...Marty Danilchuk, Dandridge, TN.** "Thank you for your help" **...Ralph Simpson, Pearl, MS.** "A friend told me about *Seek The Old Paths*. I am interested in receiving it. Thank you" **...Dorothy Griffith, Terre Haute, IN.** "Don McLaughlin was the speaker today in chapel and will be back tomorrow. It seems like most of the student body think a lot of him, obviously unaware (or taught to

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Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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