

DEFENSE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC REFUTED

I Text: Luke 5:5

INTRO) We believe God's revelation is complete & authoritative. In it God tells us what to believe & practice in the realm of religion. Since the N.T., under which we live contains no command, no example & no implication that Christians should use mechanical instruments in their worship, we do not do so. A word from the Master would be sufficient, but we find no such authorization.

In this lesson, we will examine and answer the arguments usually made by those who attempt to defend the use of mechanical instruments in the worship of Christ.

I. THE O.T. TEACHES IT.

A. True. It was definitely a part of the worship under the Levitical priesthood.

1 Chron 16:4-6, [David] appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the LORD God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly blew the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God.

2 Chron 29:25, [Hezekiah] stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, & with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, & of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets.

2 Chron 30:21, So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread 7 days with great gladness; & the Levites & the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments.

B. But both the priesthood & the law have changed.

For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. (Heb 7:12).

II. DAVID USED IT WITH GODS APPROVAL.

- A. It is true that David used the instrument in his private devotions, but its use in the public worship was by the Levites.
- B. David also burned incense, & participated in animal sacrifices, Psa. 66:13-15. He practiced polygamy, 2 Sam. 5:13 & did many other things allowed by the O.T. law under which he lived.
- C. David lived & died 1,000 years before the N.T. came into effect. We must submit to God's instructions in the N.T.

III. THE N.T. DOESN'T SAY NOT TO USE IT.

- A. This argument really gets to the root of the problem. How does God authorize? Are we allowed to do anything & everything not expressly forbidden? Since the N.T. does not specifically forbid any food or any drink from the Lord's table, are we free to use anything & everything we want to? ice cream, pork chops, M & M's, vodka?
- B. We need to understand that in establishing Bible authority, silence does not give consent.

Heb 7:12-14, For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

Heb 8:4, For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;

C. In the absence of any command, example or implication that Christians should use mechanical instruments in N.T. praise, we have no authority to do so. The N.T. does not have to forbid instruments; it needs to authorize them or else we have no authorization.

IV. ALMOST ALL CHURCHES HAVE ACCEPTED IT.

True, but that certainly does not prove it has Gods approval. Most churches teach numerous errors re baptism, how to be saved, etc.

V. ITS USE REQUIRES TALENT & WE SHOULD USE OUR TALENTS IN GOD'S SERVICE.

A. Perhaps there is some truth in this argument but it does not prove that all talents should be used in worship assemblies.

B. All such talents properly used in the field of domestic responsibilities, social obligation & wholesome recreation & entertainment may be used to God's glory but they do not belong in the worship assembly.

VI. IT IS AN AID TO WORSHIP, JUST LIKE A PITCH PIPE. If we can use a pitch pipe to get the pitch, we can use a piano to keep the pitch.

A. We are commanded to sing, Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16. Some people find the pitch pipe an aid to getting a song pitched correctly. It is NOT a musical instrument. Tho a person COULD play some sort of simple tune with a pitch pipe, he certainly couldn't do so while singing. When properly used a pitch pipe is no part of the actual song worship, anymore than turning the pages of the hymnal is part of the worship.

B. The **purpose** of singing in worship is 2-fold: (1) Teach & admonish one another, & (2) to praise God. Mechanical instruments cannot teach nor praise. God has commanded His instrument of choice – the human voice.

C. If God had told us to play psalms, hymns, & spiritual songs, the instrument would facilitate our doing so, but He did not. A piano is no more an aid to singing than roller skates are an aid to walking.

VII. MANY MEMBERS OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST PLAY INSTRUMENTS AT HOME.

A. This is about the same as the talent argument. Many things proper in the home do not belong in the worship assembly. Cook stove, sewing mach., hair drier, etc.

B. It is my conviction that instruments should not be used, even at home to praise & worship God. James 5:13. But I am willing to permit each Christian to sort that out for himself. What we do together in assembled worship should be something that we can ALL do in good conscience, fully persuaded that it will be acceptable to God.

C. For country songs, pop songs, folk songs, classical music, etc., instrumental music may be a legitimate part of wholesome recreation & entertainment, but its use in worship does not have God's authorization.

VIII. THE BOOK OF REVELATION TELLS US THERE WILL BE INSTRUMENTS IN HEAVEN, SO WE OUGHT TO USE IT NOW TO GET IN PRACTICE.

A. The book of Revelation is a book of signs & symbols, Rev. 1:1. It is very unlikely that the harps in the book of Rev are meant to be taken literally.

B. Rev. 12:7 tells us there was war in heaven. Should Christians go out & start a war to get practiced up? Rev 21:21 tells us that heaven's street is pure gold. Should we pressure the town fathers to raise taxes & pave a street with pure gold so we can get used to walking on a golden Street?

C. Even if the harps in Rev are literal, this would have no direct bearing on how we are to worship God while we remain on earth. There will be no marriage in heaven, MT 22:30. Should we dissolve all marriages to get ready for heaven?

IX. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IS INCLUDED IN THE GREEK WORDS FOR “SING” AND “PSALM.”

A. This argument is incorrect & misleading. A few Gr lexicons might lend support to this theory, but the vast majority of evidence is against it.

1. The standard lexicons, Thayer, etc., do not support this theory.

2. The worlds ripest Gr scholars obviously were not aware of such a meaning in the Gr, since their translations do not reflect any such meaning. KJV, ASV, NASB, NKJV, etc.

B. In reality, the argument that instrumental music is in the Gr is a sophisticated attempt to “snow” the unlearned. Anything that cannot be proved by the standard translations of the Scriptures should be considered highly suspect.

C. The word PSALLO is used in the N.T. 5 times. It is NEVER translated “play” in any standard translation of the Scriptures. It is almost universally translated “make melody” in Eph. 5:19, apparently because there was already a word for sing in the immediate context: “sing & make melody,” but every other useage in the N.T., the scholars simply translated the word “sing” or “sing praise.”

X. I LOVE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

I do too. But I love God more. In the home I will use mechanical music to entertain & amuse. In worship, I will seek to worship in spirit & in truth. God’s truth simply does

not authorize me to use mechanical instruments in N.T.
worship. At His word, I would. Without His word, I decline.

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