

PRAISING GOD IN SONG

Text: Hebrews 2:11-12

INTRO: One of the most noticeable differences between churches of Christ and most other religious bodies is the absence of mechanical instrumental music in the worship services.

In this lesson we will explain some of the reasons churches of Christ do not use mechanical music in their worship to God.

I. WE ARE COMMANDED TO TEST RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS & CLING TO THOSE PRACTICES WE KNOW TO BE RIGHT

Test all things; hold fast what is good (1 Thess. 5:21).

Walk as children of light... proving what is acceptable to the Lord. (Eph. 5:8-10).

A. A practice may seem right & yet not be right, Prov 14:12; Jer. 10:23; Isa. 55:8-9

B. We may safely teach & practice what God has clearly authorized. 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3; Acts 20:20, 27; 1 Pet. 4:11.

C. We are warned about presuming that God will be pleased with additions/subtractions/substitutions for what He has authorized.

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. (Deut. 4:2). Rev. 22:18-19.

II. WE LIVE IN THE N.T. AGE & ARE SUBJECT TO WHATEVER THE N.T. TEACHES ABOUT MUSIC IN WORSHIP.

For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. (Heb. 7:12). See 7:14, Levi, etc.

You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (Gal. 5:4).

A. Define music: A combination of tones that are pleasing to the ear.

B. Our brethren have frequently pointed out that there are 2 basic kinds: vocal & mechanical, and that God has authorized vocal music in N.T. worship. More specifically, He has authorized SPEAKING and SINGING.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, **speaking** to one another in psalms & hymns & spiritual songs, **singing** & making melody in your heart to the Lord. (Eph. 5:19).

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

What is the result then? . . . I will **sing** with the spirit & I will **sing** with the understanding... In the church I would rather **speak** 5 words with my understanding, that I may teach others also than 10,000 words in a tongue. (1 Cor. 14:15, 19).

...I will confess to You among the Gentiles, & **sing** to Your name. (Rom. 15:9) 2 Sam 22:50; Psa 18:49.

I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will **sing** praise to You. (Heb. 2:12). Psalm 22:22.

Is anyone among you... cheerful? Let him **sing** psalms. (James 5:13).

III. O.T. & N.T. INSTRUCTIONS CONTRASTED.

A. Circumcision.

1. O.T. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh... (Gen 17:11).

2. N.T. Rom 2:28-29, For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; & circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

NOTE: Physical circumcision produced a physical Israel. Spiritual circumcision has produced a spiritual Israel.

B. The Law.

1. O.T. physically produced on stone tablets

2. N.T. Jer. 31:31-33; Heb. 8:8-13

C. Music.

1. O.T.: Praise the Lord with the harp; **make melody** to Him with an instrument of 10 strings. **Sing** to Him a new song; **play** skillfully with a shout of joy. (Psa 33:2-3). 1 Chron 15:16; 2 Chron 5:12

2. N.T. Eph. 5:19.

IV. PURPOSES OF MUSIC IN N.T. WORSHIP.

A. To teach & admonish one another, Col. 3:16.

B. To praise, glorify, show respect for God. JS 5:13; Heb 2:12

V. NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOWING GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

- A. The sons of Aaron, Lev. 10:1-2, 10.
- B. Moses. Num. 20:7-12.
- C. David moving the ark, Uzza. 2 Sam. 6.

VI. PAUL'S STATEMENTS TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH RE EDIFICATION. **READ 1 COR. 14:6-19.**

VII. EVIDENCE FROM SCHOLARS. *PSALLO*.

Thayer: In the New Testament, to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praise of God in song.

AGL: In the New Testament, to sing praises.

Vine: In the N.T., to sing a hymn, sing praise.

NOTE: I have been told that Green, Contopoulous, Vincent & others concur & that Sophocles, a native Greek who lived in the first century defined the word: to chant, to sing religious songs.

VIII. THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY.

- A. Mechanical music was introduced by Vitalian in 666.
- B. The Gr. Orthodox Ch, which still uses the Gr. lang has been reluctant to accept mech music.
- C. Virtually all the older Protestant denoms began without it: Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, etc.
- D. Well known scholars & religious leaders who opposed its use include John Calvin, John Wesley, Adam Clarke, Charles Spurgeon, etc.
- E. Justin Martyr in A.D. 139 wrote, "The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches, as it was among the Jews in their infant state."
- F. Clement of Alexandria in A.D. 190 wrote: "We make use of only one 'organ' or 'instrument,' even the peaceful **word**, with which we honor God; no longer with the old psaltery, trumpet, drum, cymbal, or pipe."
- G. Cyprian in 240 A.D. wrote, "Instruments were permitted in the Old Testament for the sake of their [the people's] weakness, to stir up their minds to perform their external worship."

IX. REASONS NOT TO USE MECHANICAL MUSIC IN NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP.

- 1. God didn't authorize it.
- 2. It does not pertain to life or godliness, 1 Pet. 1:3.
- 3. It is not a good work, 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
- 4. It is not profitable, Acts 20:20.
- 5. It is not any part of the counsel of God, Acts 20:27.
- 6. It is not a part of the doctrine of Christ, 2 John 9.
- 7. It is addition to what God authorized, Rev. 22:18.
- 8. Jesus never taught it, Acts 1:1.
- 9. The apostles never taught it, Matt. 28:19-20.
- 10. When we use it, we are not speaking as the oracles of God.
- 11. It is unknown to the N.T. therefore not a part of N.T. Christianity.

CONCLUSION: Col 3:16-17 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching & admonishing one another in psalms & hymns & spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.