

# Music in Church

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The Excelsior Springs Church

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- I. A brief overview of music in the worship service of God's religion
  1. Adam to Noah - No musical instruments in God's worship
  2. Noah to Abraham - No musical instruments in God's worship
  3. Abraham to Moses - No musical instruments in God's worship
  4. Moses to Christ (the Old Testament)
    - A. Moses was commanded to make two silver trumpets that were to be used to call the assembly together at the tabernacle.
    - B. Those were the only musical instruments that God commanded in the law of Moses.
    - C. Long after the law of Moses was written, David added numerous musical instruments to the worship service.
  5. The New Testament
    - A. Saints are commanded in the NT to *sing* in the church (**Eph 5:19; Col 3:16**).
    - B. There are no commandments in the NT to use musical instruments in the church.
    - C. There are no examples in the NT of musical instruments being used in the church.
  
- II. The use of musical instruments in the Old Testament church
  1. Musical instruments prior to the law of Moses.
    - A. There is no record of musical instruments being used in worship during the patriarchal age.
    - B. The first mention of musical instruments in the Bible was in **Gen 4:21**.
    - C. They were created by Jubal the great, great, great, great grandson of Cain (**Gen 4:16-21**).
    - D. Note that there were musical instruments available to men for hundreds of years prior to Moses, but God never commanded them to be used in worship.
  2. Musical instruments in the law of Moses.
    - A. God commanded that two silver trumpets were to be used to call the assembly together at the tabernacle (**Num 10:2-3**).
      - i. The trumpets were to be blown during their solemn days when they offered sacrifices (**Num 10:10**).
      - ii. The trumpets were also to be used to call the men to war (**Num 10:4-6, 9**).
      - iii. The priests (the sons of Aaron) were to only ones who were to be blowing the trumpets in the OT church (**Num 10:7-8**).
    - B. There is no mention of any other musical instruments used in worship in the law of Moses (Genesis - Deuteronomy).
    - C. The word *music* or *musical* is not found in the law of Moses (Genesis - Deuteronomy).
  3. The musical instruments in the OT church after the law of Moses was written were added by David.
    - A. David was a talented musician (**1Sa 16:16-18**).
    - B. The first mention of "instruments of musick" in the service of God is in **1Ch 15:16** when *David* instructed the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music (psalteries, harps, and cymbals).
      - i. This was not part of the worship of God at the tabernacle that God had ordained in the law of Moses.

- ii. This was a celebration that David led when the ark of the covenant was transported from the house of Obededom to Jerusalem (the city of David) **(1Ch 15:25-29)**.
  - iii. The ark was placed in a tent that David made for it **(1Ch 16:1-2)**.
  - iv. This tent was not the same tabernacle that God had instructed Moses to build, yet it was called the tabernacle of the Lord **(1Ch 16:39)**.
  - v. The instruments were not the instruments that God had ordained in the law of Moses (two silver trumpets), yet they were called "musical instruments of God" **(1Ch 16:42)**.
  - vi. God permitted these instruments to be used in the tabernacle of David, though it was not His original design.
    - a. God likewise permitted divorce because of the hardness of their hearts, though it was not His original design **(Mat 19:8)**.
    - b. God even permitted polygamy **(2Sa 3:2-5; 2Sa 5:13)** without judging David for it, even though He specifically stated that the king was not to multiply wives to himself **(Deut 17:17)**.
    - c. Therefore, just because God *allowed* David to add instruments to His worship service doesn't mean that He initially *commanded* him or *wanted* him to do so.
- C. Israel went from having two priests blow two trumpets to call the assembly together for worship under the law of Moses to having 4,000 Levites playing musical instruments *which David made* **(1Ch 23:5)**.
- D. The instruments of music which David used when he brought the ark of the covenant to his tabernacle were also used when the ark was transferred from David's tabernacle to the newly built temple **(2Co 5:1-2, 12-13)**.
- E. During the dedication of the temple, the "instruments of musick of the LORD" were used "which *David the king had made* to praise the LORD" **(2Ch 7:5-6)**.
- F. During the days of Hezekiah, he commanded that the house of God be reopened and cleansed of the filthiness that had been brought into it **(2Ch 29:3-5)**.
- i. The Levites were set in the house of God with musical instruments "according to *the commandment of David*" **(2Ch 29:25a)**.
  - ii. As was mentioned earlier, though it was not the Lord's original design, He did command His prophets to tell the people to use the instruments that David ordained **(2Ch 29:25b)**.
    - a. This is akin to God giving commandments regulating divorce and remarriage even though it was not His original design **(Deut 24:1-4)**.
    - b. Likewise God gave commandments regulating polygamy although it was not His original design **(Exo 21:10-11)**.
    - c. God suffered these things and then regulated them due to the hardness of their hearts **(Mat 19:8)**.
    - d. So it was with musical instruments in worship. They were not part of God's original design, but He allowed them and then gave commandments regulating them.
  - iii. "The Levites stood with the *instruments of David*" **(2Ch 29:26)**.

- iv. The singing was accompanied by "instruments *ordained by David*" (**2Ch 29:27**) which they used as they worshiped God (**2Ch 29:28-30**).
- G. At the dedication of the rebuilt wall of Jerusalem after the Babylonian destruction, the singers and the players of the cymbals, psalteries, and harps which David had ordained were again used (**Neh 12:27**) which were "the musical instruments of *David*" (**Neh 12:36**).
- H. When the foundation of the 2nd temple was laid, the Levites praised the Lord with cymbals "after *the ordinance of David* king of Israel" (**Ezr 3:10**).
- I. It was David, not God, who invented the instruments of music that were used in the OT worship service (**Amo 6:5**).
- 4. There are many references in the Psalms to praising the Lord with musical instruments including trumpets, psalteries, harps, stringed instruments, organs, and cymbals (**Psa 150:3-5**).
- 5. But remember the following:
  - A. Firstly, the idea of worshiping God with those instruments was invented by David, not God.
  - B. Secondly, God permitted it, but it was not His original design just like polygamy and divorce & remarriage.
  - C. Thirdly, using instruments in worship was a statute for Israel, not for the NT church (**Psa 81:1-4**).
  - D. Fourthly, we get our instructions for worshiping God in the NT church from the New Testament, not the Old Testament (more on this later).

### III. The use of musical instruments (or lack thereof) in the New Testament church

- 1. The following is every single reference to musical instruments in the NT.
  - A. Jesus spoke of figuratively piping to people who would not dance (**Mat 11:17; Luk 7:32**).
  - B. This has nothing to do with music in the NT church.
  - C. The prodigal son's father threw him a party upon his return with music and dancing (**Luk 15:25**).
    - i. No mention is made of instruments.
    - ii. This passage has nothing to do with music in church.
  - D. Paul said that if he could speak with the tongues of men and angels and had not charity, he would be as a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal (**1Co 13:1**).
  - E. This has nothing to do with music in the NT church.
  - F. Pipes, harps, and trumpets are mentioned in **1Co 14:7-8**.
    - i. Paul used them as an illustration of the fact that in order for them to be of any value they have to give a distinct, understandable sound.
    - ii. The same principle is true when speaking in tongues (in the first century when that gift was still in place); if words are not uttered that are easy to be understood, they are of no value (**1Co 14:9**).
    - iii. This reference to musical instruments has nothing to do with music in the NT church.
  - G. There are harpers harping on their harps in heaven (**Rev 5:8; Rev 14:2; Rev 15:2**).
    - i. These passages are referring to heaven, not the NT church on earth.
    - ii. See Section VI.

- H. Jesus taught us to not sound a trumpet when we give alms (**Mat 6:2**).
  - I. This has nothing to do with music in the NT church.
  - J. There will be a great sound of a trumpet at the return of Christ when He raises the dead (**1Co 15:52; 1Th 4:16**) and sends His angels to gather the elect from the four winds (**Mat 24:31**).
  - K. This has nothing to do with music in the NT church.
  - L. There was a trumpet when God appeared on Mount Sinai (**Heb 12:19**).
  - M. This has nothing to do with music in the NT church.
  - N. John heard a voice that sounded like a trumpet when he received the Revelation (**Rev 1:10; Rev 4:1**).
    - i. The plagues that the angels punish the earth with are announced by trumpets (**Rev 8:2, 6, 13; Rev 9:14**).
    - ii. These verses have nothing to do with music in the NT church.
  - O. Mystery Babylon has harpers, musicians, pipers, and trumpeters (**Rev 18:22**).
    - i. Mystery Babylon is a wicked false religion.
    - ii. This passage has nothing to do with music in the NT church.
2. You have just heard every single mention of musical instruments in the entire New Testament, and not one of them commands or authorizes them to be used in the NT church nor gives an example of their use in it.
3. The commandments in the NT regarding music in church.
- A. The following is a list of every single place where music is mentioned in the NT church.
    - i. As you will see there is not one mention of a musical instrument in any of them.
    - ii. Musical instruments are entirely absent in the NT concerning the church service for a reason.
  - B. We are commanded to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (**Eph 5:19; Col 3:16**).
    - i. Sing *v.* - 1. a. To articulate or utter words or sounds in succession with musical inflections or modulations of the voice, so as to produce an effect entirely different from that of ordinary speech; spec. to do this in a skilled manner, as the result of training and practice.
      - a. Musical *adj.* - A. *adj.* 1. Of or belonging to music. 2. Having the nature or characteristics of music; tuneful, melodious, harmonious; pleasing in sound, euphonious. Of sounds: Such as are used in music; having the nature of 'tones', as distinguished from mere 'noises'.
      - b. Music *n.* - 1. That one of the fine arts which is concerned with the combination of sounds with a view to beauty of form and the expression of emotion; also, the science of the laws or principles (of melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) by which this art is regulated.
    - ii. Psalm *n.* - 1. In a general sense: Any sacred song that is or may be sung in religious worship; a hymn: esp. in biblical use. (In quot. *c* 1175 applied to the Creed.) Also more generally, any song or ode of a sacred or serious character.

- iii. Hymn *n.* - 1. A song of praise to God; any composition in praise of God which is adapted to be chanted or sung; spec. a metrical composition adapted to be sung in a religious service; sometimes distinguished from psalm or anthem, as not being part of the text of the Bible.
  - iv. Spiritual *n.* - A. adj. I. 1. a. Of or pertaining to, affecting or concerning, the spirit or higher moral qualities, esp. as regarded in a religious aspect. (Freq. in express or implied distinction to bodily, corporal, or temporal.) c. Of songs, etc.: Devotional, sacred
  - v. Song *n.* - 1. The act or art of singing; the result or effect of this, vocal music; that which is sung (in general or collective sense); occas., poetry.
  - vi. Notice that in all of these definitions, there is not one mention of musical instruments.
  - vii. Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs does not require musical instrument accompaniment.
- C. We are to make melody in our hearts (**Eph 5:19**).
- i. Melody *n.* - 1. a. Sweet music, whether vocal or instrumental; beautiful arrangement of musical sounds; beauty of musical sounds, tunefulness.
  - ii. As the definition shows, melody can be made vocally.
  - iii. Vocal melody is what's under consideration because it is to be made *in our hearts* by *singing*.
- D. Jesus left us the example of singing a hymn in the church (**Mat 26:30 & Mar 14:26 c/w Heb 2:12**).
- E. James instructed church members to *sing* psalms when they were merry (**Jam 5:13**).
- F. It was prophesied in the Psalms that Jews and Gentiles would *sing* praises unto God together in the NT church (**Rom 15:9 c/w Psa 18:49**).
- G. Paul and Silas *sang* praises to God while in prison (**Act 16:25**).
- H. The word "play" and it's cognates is only used once in the NT, and it is not referring to musical instruments (**1Co 10:7**).

4. Musical instruments in the NT church are unbiblical.
- A. There is not one single mention of musical instruments in the NT church.
  - B. There is not one single commandment to use musical instruments in the NT church.
  - C. There is not one single example of a musical instrument being used in the NT church.
  - D. Every place where music in the church is mentioned, it is *always singing*.
  - E. Therefore, using musical instruments in the NT church is a tradition of men that makes the word of God of none effect (**Mar 7:7-9, 13**).

#### IV. The purpose of music in the NT church

- 1. We are to *speak* to one another in song (**Eph 5:19**).

  - A. Speak *v.* - 1. a. To utter or pronounce words or articulate sounds; to use or exercise the faculty of speech; to express one's thoughts by words.
  - B. We are not to *play* to each other in song.
  - C. Musical instruments do not speak to us, but the words of doctrinally sound songs do.

- 2. We are to *teach* and *admonish* each other in song (**Col 3:16**).

- A. Teach v. - II. To show by way of information or instruction. (Now the leading sense.) 5. *to teach a thing*: To impart or convey the knowledge of; to give instruction or lessons in (a subject); g to make known, deliver (a message). With simple obj. or obj. clause. 6. *to teach a person a thing, a thing to a person (or agent)*: a. To communicate something to a person, by way of instruction; gto inform. 7. a. *to teach a person or agent* (with personal object only): To impart knowledge to, give instruction to; to inform, instruct, educate, train, school.
  - B. Admonish v. - 1. *gen.* To put (a person) in mind of duties; to counsel against wrong practices; to give authoritative or warning advice; to exhort, to warn.
  - C. Musical instruments do not teach and admonish us, but singing the words of doctrinally sound songs does.
3. When we sing hymns, we declare God's name unto our brethren (**Heb 2:12**).
  4. Musical instruments in no way declare God's name.
  5. We are to sing with the spirit and with the understanding (**1Co 14:15 c/w Psa 47:7**).
    - A. Spirit n. - 1. a. The animating or vital principle in man (and animals); that which gives life to the physical organism, in contrast to its purely material elements; the breath of life. c. In contexts relating to temporary separation of the immaterial from the material part of man's being, or to perception of a purely intellectual character. Chiefly in phr. *in spirit*. d. Incorporeal or immaterial being, as opposed to body or matter; being or intelligence conceived as distinct from, or independent of, anything physical or material. (Cf. *mind* n.1 17f.)
    - B. Understanding n. - 1. a. (Without article.) Power or ability to understand; intellect, intelligence. c. With *the*: The faculty of comprehending and reasoning; the intellect.
  6. In other words our singing in church should be focused on our *intellect*, not on our *emotions*.
  7. That is one of the reasons that God instructs us only to sing in our worship services.
    - A. God wants to be worshiped with our spirit, mind, and intellect in truth (**Joh 4:23-24**), not merely with our emotions.
    - B. When we sing doctrinally sound hymns to God, we worship Him in truth; and doing so will bring about heart-felt emotions.
    - C. If we hear beautiful instrumental music in church, it may evoke our emotions, but it will not be due to the truth of God which feeds the soul.
    - D. Emotions that arise from beautiful instrumental music can actually hinder faith and understanding rather than facilitate it (**Luk 24:41**).