

Is Instrumental Music in Worship Scriptural?

I. Define our terms

- a. Instrumental music = use of mechanical instruments such as guitar, piano, etc.
- b. Worship = that which is offered consciously and deliberately as homage or obeisance to God; prostrating oneself before God in homage
- c. Scriptural = in accordance with, according to, the Scriptures, that which is written, God-breathed

II. The Question is Not:

- a. Whether it can be financially afforded
- b. Whether anyone is naturally, musically talented or trained
- c. Whether a personal preference
- d. Whether the majority desires it
- e. Whether it is according to or not according to tradition

III. We want the answer from the Scriptures

- a. The answer from the Scriptures will tell us what we can do by faith and thus what pleases God.
 - i. Romans 10:17
 - ii. Hebrews 11:6
 - iii. Hebrews 11:5; Genesis 5:24
- b. The answer from the Scriptures will tell us what is authorized.
 - i. The meaning of authority in practical terms
 1. Matthew 8:5-10
 2. Matthew 21:23-27
 - ii. All authority given to Jesus; authority delegated to the apostles
 1. Matthew 28:18
 2. Matthew 18:18
 3. Found in the written Scriptures
 - a. 1 Corinthians 14:37
 4. Do only what is authorized
 - a. Colossians 3:17
 - b. Matthew 7:21-24
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:6, 17
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 2:15

IV. How then do the Scriptures answer the question?

- a. There is no positive, divine authority in the New Testament for instruments of music in worship.
 - i. No command, approved example, or necessary implication of instruments of music in worship to God in the New Testament Scriptures
- b. Here are nine Scriptures in the New Testament that speak of another kind of music that is offered in worship to God, and that is singing.
 - i. Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13
- c. Clearly, then, the New Testament Scriptures authorize singing in worship to God, including commands to do so.
 - i. And no New Testament Scripture authorizes the use of instruments of music in worship to God.

V. Examine some reasons given for using instruments of music in worship to God

- a. Reason #1: "The Bible doesn't say not to use the instrument in worship."
 - i. What do the Scriptures say?
 - 1. Silence does not give consent. Silence is prohibitive.
 - a. Hebrews 7:12-14
 - b. Leviticus 10:1-4
 - c. Acts 15:24
 - 2. Absence of a "not to" does not equal consent!
- b. Reason #2: "The instrument in worship is simply an aid to singing like a song book is an aid. It is not an addition."
 - i. What do the Scriptures say?
 - 1. True, we cannot add: Revelation 22:18
 - 2. But the instrument is not an aid. It is an addition of a different kind of music.
 - a. Genesis 6:14; 6:22-7:1. Gopher, a species of wood, is specified. Oak is another species; it is an addition. A saw to cut the wood is not an addition; it is an aid.
 - b. Ephesians 5:19. Singing, a type of music, is specified. Instrumental music is another type of music. A songbook is not an additional type of music; it is an aid.
- c. Reason #3: "We have instruments in our homes which we play for personal entertainment and recreation"
 - i. What do the Scriptures say?
 - 1. Such reasoning would authorize anything we do at home to be brought into worship.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 11:22
- d. Reason #4: "Instruments were used in the Old Testament. David was a man after God's own heart, and he used them in worship"
 - i. What do the Scriptures say?
 - 1. The question to be settled is whether instrumental music in worship is scriptural, not whether it was.
 - a. Colossians 2:14
 - b. 2 Chronicles 29:25
- e. Reason #5: "Revelation 5:8 and 14:2 speak of harps in heaven"
 - i. What do the Scriptures say?
 - 1. The things written in Revelation were "signified" – Revelation 1:1
 - 2. But even if there were to be literal harps in heaven, what would that have to do with what is commanded us now?
- f. Reason #6: "The Greek word 'psallo' in Ephesians 5:19, translated "make melody," includes an instrument of music.
 - i. What do the Scriptures say?
 - 1. Psallo simply means to pluck. The object must be specified; e.g., pluck a string, pluck a hair, pluck a plumb line.
 - 2. In the Ephesians 5:19, the object to be plucked, figuratively, is the heart, the inner man
 - 3. Ephesians 5:19 tells us to "pluck," make melody, in our hearts, not on an instrument of music

VI. Conclusion

- a. No authority for instruments of music in worship
- b. Cannot be done by faith, for faith comes by hearing the word of God, and it is not in the word of God.
- c. Cannot be done in the name of Christ. A violation of the authority of Christ because a violation of the law of Christ. A violation of the law of Christ is sin. Using instruments in worship to God is sin.
- d. Let us do what Jesus Christ our Savior has authorized.
 - i. Matthew 7:21-24