

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Instrumental Music in Worship

Churches of Christ, since the time of the apostles, have not used instrumental music in worship. The reason for this is simple: it is not authorized in the New Testament scriptures. Churches which have added musical instruments to their worship must look to the Old Testament for authority.

In the Old Testament praising God was specified to be done in a certain way, "Make yourself two trumpets of silver...The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets..." (Numbers 10:2, 8, 10). King Hezekiah "stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with harps, and with lyres... for the command was from the Lord through His prophets," (2 Chronicles 29:25). Therefore, the instruments and even the ones who were to play them, was specified by God. God commanded the type of "praise worship" that was pleasing to Him in the Old Testament. God gave the "WHO": "Priestly sons of Aaron shall blow them." The "WHEN": "appointed feasts, burnt offerings, and sacrifices of your peace offerings." The "WHAT": "two trumpets of silver of hammered work."

Many people today say, "Where in the New Testament does God tell us precisely HOW He wants us to worship in song?" For the "true worshipers" (John 4:23), God commanded specific ways to please Him in worship today. Paul wrote, "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is"..."speaking to one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord," (Ephesians 5:17, 19). Paul also wrote, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father," (Colossians 3:16-17). Remember, in the Old Testament you needed to have the right people present for worship [the priestly sons of Aaron and the Levites]. God's people today are the right people because we are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5). The writer of Hebrews said, "Let us continually [with one another or individually] offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips [notice, no instruments] that give thanks to His name," (Hebrews 13:15).

When God wanted people to know about "singers and players of instruments" in the Old Testament, He mentioned them (2 Chron. 9:11; 23:13; 29:28). The commandment in the New Testament is for the singers to use the instrument of "our heart with thankfulness to God". There are congregations that are "going beyond and not abiding in the teachings of Christ" (2 John 9) by using instruments in their worship, for the use of such instruments is not found in the teaching of Christ.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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