

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

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Arguments for the use of mechanical instruments:

The Old Testament shows their use in worship and, therefore, authorizes them

[Psa_33:2](#), "Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings."

[2Ch_29:25-29](#), "And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for *so was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: *and* all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped."

But,

We are not bound by the Old Law today

[Col_2:14](#), "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"

[Heb_7:18-19](#), "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God."

If the Old Testament authorizes instrumental music today, then why are we not offering burnt offerings ([Exo_29:38-42](#); [Lev_6:9-13](#)) or burning incense ([Exo_30:7-8](#), [Exo_30:34-36](#))?

We recognize that these were merely symbols of the new

[Rom_12:1](#), "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service."

[1Pe_2:5](#), "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up

spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

[Rev_5:8](#), "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."

Consider the words of the noted and respected Baptist theologian, Charles Spurgeon, commenting on Psalm 42:4 and its "with the voice of joy and praise": "David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of *the singing* of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettinesses of a quartette, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it."

John Calvin, on Psalm 33, wrote, "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law."

Adam Clarke, a Methodist, on Psalm 62 wrote, "Will our modern performers on instruments of music in churches and chapels, pretend to the prophetic influence? If they do not, and cannot, how dare they quote such passages in vindication of their practice, which can be no better than a dulcet noise without its original meaning, and alien from its primary use? Do they indeed prophesy with harps, and psalteries, and cymbals? or with their play-house aggregate of fiddles and flutes, bass-viols and bassoons, clarionets and kettle-drums? Away with such trumpery and pollution from the worship and Church of Christ!"

The book of Revelation shows their use in the New Testament and, therefore, authorizes them

The book of Revelation is a book of symbols

[Rev_1:10](#), "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,"--the trumpet describes the voice

[Rev_4:1](#), "After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."--the trumpet describes the voice

[Rev_8:13](#), "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the

midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"--the trumpet is a symbol of warning not worship

[Rev_9:14](#), "Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."--the trumpet is a symbol of warning not worship

[Rev_5:8](#), "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."--this is an image of a heavenly scene not earthly worship; moreover, it is in the context with incense which is not literal, but figurative

[Rev_14:2](#), "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:"--this is an image of a symbolic heavenly scene not literal earthly worship

[Rev_15:2](#), "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."--this is an image of a symbolic heavenly scene not literal earthly worship

Arguments against instrumental music

The commands in the New Testament are for singing

[Eph_5:18-20](#), "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"

[Col_3:16](#), "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

A positive command eliminates that not authorized

A command to sing eliminates playing

The command to have bread and the fruit of the vine on the Lord's table eliminates anything else, like coffee and doughnuts; some might say, "those are completely different"; would cranberry-grape juice and bread with a cheese spread be any better?

The command to offer specific fire (that from [Lev_9:24](#)) on the altar of incense eliminated any fire that was strange--Nadab and

Abihu were punished with death for such an unauthorized offering ([Lev 10:1-2](#))

The Scriptural practice in the New Testament was singing

[1Co 14:15](#), "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."