

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**).

V. Why the musical instruments in the OT church are not carried over into the NT church.

1. The law of Moses is abolished
 - A. The law of Moses was only ever given to the nation of Israel and no other nation (**Psa 147:19-20; Rom 3:1-2**).
 - B. It was only given to them for a limited time until Christ came (**Gal 3:19**).
 - C. When Christ came, he fulfilled the law of Moses (**Mat 5:17**).
 - D. Once Christ fulfilled it, He abolished it and put it away (**2Co 3:6-7, 11, 13-14; Eph 2:15; Col 2:14-17**).
 - E. Gentiles were never under the law of Moses prior to becoming Christians, nor after doing so (**Act 15:5, 19-20**).
 - F. The OT has been taken away and replaced with the NT (**Heb 8:13**).

- G. Christians are under the New Testament (the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ) and its laws for conduct both in their personal lives and in the public assembly of the church (**Jam 1:25; Jam 2:12; 1Co 9:21; Gal 6:2; Mat 28:19-20; 1Co 11:1-2**).
- H. Since the OT is abolished and put away and has been replaced by the NT, the only parts of the OT that are still binding on Christians today are the parts that are repeated in the NT.
 - i. See the series called "The Christian and the Old Testament" for further proof of this: <https://kjcchurch.com/old-testament>.
 - ii. Therefore, music in the New Testament church must only be regulated by the commandments in the NT, not the OT.
 - iii. There are only commandments to sing in church, and there is not one commandment or example to use musical instruments in church; therefore, the musical instruments in the OT have not been carried over into the NT.

2. The argument from silence

- A. When the Bible gives a positive commandment prescribing what is to be done, it thereby prohibits any action more, less, or different from it.
- B. God doesn't have to tell a man to *not do* all other things when He has told him *what to do*; because contained in the imperative is a prohibition of all things contrary to it.
- C. When Moses commanded that the priests were to be from the tribe of Levi, that automatically prohibited a man from any other tribe from being a priest (**Heb 7:12-14**).
 - i. Moses did not have to specify that the other tribes couldn't be priests.
 - ii. His silence concerning the other tribes in conjunction with his positive commandment that the priests would be from the tribe of Levi excluded all other tribes from the priesthood.
 - iii. A man from another tribe could not attempt to be a priest using the following argument: "Sure God said that the priests were to come from the tribe of Levi, but *God never said that I couldn't be a priest!*".
 - iv. Yet, people try to justify using instruments by saying: "Yes, God only said to sing, but *He didn't say that we can't use instruments.*"
 - v. Yes, He did. He did so by only telling us to sing which automatically excludes any other type of music in church.
- D. Here are some other Biblical examples of the argument from silence.
 - i. The law of Moses stated that the shewbread was for Aaron and his sons (**Lev 24:9**).
 - a. From that statement, Jesus concluded that it was not lawful for David and his men to eat the shewbread, but only for the priests (**Mat 12:3-4**).
 - b. A non-priest in Israel could not make the argument: "Sure, God said it was for the priests, but *He didn't say that the rest of us couldn't eat it!*"
 - c. If God says it's for the priests, then that unequivocally means that no one else can eat it.

- d. If God only says to sing in church, then that unequivocally means that no other music is to be used in the church.
 - ii. The law of Moses stated that the Levites, specifically the sons of Kohath, were to carry the ark on their shoulders when it was to be moved (**Num 4:15; Num 7:6-9**).
 - a. David decided to move the ark on a cart, and Uzza was killed by the LORD as a result when he touched the ark to keep it from falling off of the cart (**1 Ch 13:7-10**).
 - b. David understood the argument from silence after this ordeal when he said "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God" (**1 Ch 15:2**).
 - c. David couldn't argue with God and say: "But you *didn't say* that we *couldn't* move it on a cart!"
 - d. If God says the sons of Kohath are to bear the ark on their shoulders, then no one else by no other means can transport the ark.
 - e. If God says that we are to sing in church, then no other form of music such as instrumental music is to be used.
 - iii. Judaizers had told the Gentile Christians that they needed to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses (**Act 15:24**).
 - a. The apostles gave them no such commandment (**Act 15:24**).
 - b. If no such commandment was given, then no such commandment is binding on the church.
 - iv. The same reasoning applies to musical instruments in the NT church.
 - a. The New Testament tells churches to *sing* (**Eph 5:19; Col 3:16**).
 - b. In that it tells them to sing, only singing should be done.
 - c. The argument from silence demands that nothing be added to the commandment, such as musical instruments.
 - d. If God wanted musical instruments in church, He would have specified such.
 - e. Furthermore, how would one know which instruments God wants to be used since He didn't specify any?
- E. Imagine how large the Bible would have to be if the only things that were prohibited were those things specifically listed as such.
 - i. "There is no express condemnation of mechanical instruments in worship. However, the Bible is not a book designed to list everything to which the Lord would object. Can you image what a book the Bible would be if the Lord had to tell us everything not to do? For example, the Lord would have had to say, "Thou shalt not put potatoes, peas, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, etc. on the Lord's supper." If the Lord omitted telling us any item, one could argue, "The Lord did not say, "Thou shalt not use seaweed in observing the Lord's supper.'" The nature of positive, divine authority is that the Lord tells us what to do. By telling us to use unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in observing the Lord's supper, the Lord prohibited the usage of anything else." (Mike Willis, [Truth Magazine](#), *Why I Oppose Instrumental Music in Worship (2): The Introduction of Mechanical Instruments in Worship*, 10-3-1985)

- ii. "When God specified the kind of animal to be used in a given sacrifice, that eliminated every other kind of animal. When God specified that Naaman [sic] dip seven times in the Jordan River to be cleansed of his leprosy, that eliminated every other river. When God specified the items to be used on the Lord's table, that eliminated every other kind of item which might be used. When God specified the kind of music to be used in His worship-singing, that eliminated every other kind of music. Hence, the Lord does not have to say "thou shalt not. . ." in order for mechanical instruments of music in worship to be unauthorized." (Ibid)
- iii. "Too, there are many other religious practices which many people condemn for which there is no "thou shalt not." Here are a few of them:

A separate priesthood

A pope

Sprinkling or pouring for baptism

Religious celebration of Easter, Christmas, etc.

Burning incense and candles

Use of holy water

Ecclesiastical synods, councils, associations, etc.

"If the argument which says "The Lord did not say, 'Thou shalt not use instrumental music... proves that one can use mechanical instruments of music in worship, then the same argument will prove that each of the above (and many other things not mentioned above) is also acceptable." (Ibid)

- 3. The musical instruments in the OT worship service were not commanded by God, but were invented by David and were suffered by God (see Section II, 3) .
- 4. Quotes from commentators about musical instruments in church.
 - A. John Calvin
 - i. "There is a distinction, however, to be observed here, that we may not indiscriminately consider as applicable to ourselves, everything which was formerly enjoined upon the Jews. I have no doubt that playing upon cymbals, touching the harp and the viol, and all that kind of music, which is so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, was a part of the education; that is to say, the puerile instruction of the law: I speak of the stated service of the temple. For even now, if believers choose to cheer themselves with musical instruments, they should, I think, make it their object not to dissever their cheerfulness from the praises of God. But when they frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and

the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to him." ([John Calvin commenting on Psalm 33](#))

B. Matthew Henry

- i. "Here were the charms of music to allure them into a compliance and the terrors of the fiery furnace to frighten them into a compliance....Note, That way that sense directs the most will go; there is nothing so bad which the careless world will not be drawn to by a concert of music, or driven to by a fiery furnace. And by such methods as these false worship has been set up and maintained" (Matthew Henry commenting on Daniel 3).

C. John Wesley (founder of Methodism)

- i. "The late venerable and most eminent divine, the Revelation John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an elegant poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of the Methodists said, in his terse and powerful manner, "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither Heard nor Seen.'" (Adam Clark's Commentary on the Bible, commenting on Amos 6:5)

D. Adam Clark (Methodist, Bible commentator - 1762-1832)

- i. "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-voils and bassoons, clarionets and kettle-drums? Away with such trumpery and pollution from the worship and Church of Christ!" (Adam Clark's Commentary on the Bible, commenting on Psalm 62)
- ii. "Query, Did God ever ordain instruments of music to be used in his worship? Can they be used in Christian assemblies according to the spirit of Christianity? Has Jesus Christ, or his apostles, ever commanded or sanctioned the use of them? Were they ever used any where in the apostolic Church? Does the use of them at present, in Christian congregations, ever increase the spirit of devotion? Does it ever appear that bands of musicians, either in their collective or individual capacity, are more spiritual, or as spiritual, as the other parts of the Church of Christ? Is there less pride, self-will, stubbornness, insubordination, lightness, and frivolity, among such persons, than among the other professors of Christianity found in the same religious society? Is it ever remarked or known that musicians in the house of God have attained to any depth of piety, or superior soundness of understanding, in the things of God? Is it ever found that those Churches and Christian societies which have and use instruments of music in Divine worship are more holy, or as holy, as those societies which do not use them? And is it always found that the ministers which affect and recommend them to be used in the worship of Almighty God, are the most spiritual men, and

the most spiritual and useful preachers? Can mere sounds, no matter how melodious, where no word nor sentiment is or can be uttered, be considered as giving praise to God? Is it possible that pipes or strings of any kind can give God praise? Can God be pleased with sounds which are emitted by no sentient being, and have in themselves no meaning? If these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative: then, query, Is not the introduction of such instruments into the worship of God antichristian, and calculated to debase and ultimately ruin the spirit and influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? And should not all who wish well to the spread and establishment of pure and undefiled religion, lift up their hand, their influence, and their voice against them? The argument from their use in the Jewish service is futile in the extreme when applied to Christianity." (Adam Clark's Commentary on the Bible, commenting on 1Ch 16:42)

- iii. "It was by the hand or commandment of the Lord and his prophets that the Levites should praise the Lord; for so the Hebrew text may be understood: and it was by the order of David that so many instruments of music should be introduced into the Divine service. But were it even evident, which it is not, either from this or any other place in the sacred writings, that instruments of music were prescribed by Divine authority under the law, could this be adduced with any semblance of reason, that they ought to be used in Christian worship? No: the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion are against this: and those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and that where they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth, for to no such worship are those instruments friendly." (Adam Clark's Commentary on the Bible, commenting on 2Ch 29:25)
- iv. "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity." (Adam Clark's Commentary on the Bible, commenting on Amos 6:5)

E. John Girardeau (Presbyterian)

- i. "It has thus been proved, by an appeal to historical facts, that the church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for twelve hundred years; and that the Calvinistic Reformed Church ejected it from its services as an element of Popery, even the Church of England having come very nigh to its extrusion from her worship. The historical argument, therefore, combines with the Scriptural and the confessional to raise a solemn and powerful protest against its employment by the Presbyterian

Church. It is heresy in the sphere of worship." (John Girardeau, [*Instrumental Music*](#), p. 179).

VI. Musical instruments in heaven

1. It appears that Lucifer was the music minister in heaven prior to his fall (**Eze 28:13**).
 - A. Tabret *n.* - 1. A small tabor; a timbrel.
 - B. Tabor *n.* - 1. The earlier name of the drum; in later use (esp. since the introduction of the name *drum* in the 16th c.), A small kind of drum, used chiefly as an accompaniment to the pipe or trumpet; a taborin or tabret.
 - C. Timbrel *n.* - A musical instrument of percussion; a tambourine or the like that could be held up in the hand.
 - D. Pipe *n.* - I. A musical tube. 1. a. A musical wind-instrument consisting of a single tube of reed, straw, or (now usually) wood, blown by the mouth, such as a flageolet, flute, or oboe.
 - E. Lucifer's church has lots of musical instruments (**Rev 18:22**).
 - F. False religion, which is devil worship (**1 Co 10:20**), has for millennia been accompanied by musical instruments (**Dan 3:7**).
2. There is singing in heaven (**Rev 5:9; Rev 14:3; Rev 15:3**).
3. There are musical instruments in heaven now (**Rev 5:8; Rev 14:2; Rev 15:2**).
4. But just because something is done in heaven doesn't necessarily mean that God wants it done in His church on earth.
 - A. Things are different in heaven than they are here on earth.
 - i. There is no marriage in heaven (**Mat 22:30**).
 - ii. The fact that there isn't marriage in heaven is not a basis for concluding that Christians should not marry in this life.
 - iii. There is no sorrow, pain, tears, or death in heaven (**Rev 7:17; Rev 21:4**).
 - iv. The fact that there is not sorrow in heaven doesn't mean that Christians can't have sorrow on earth.
 - B. Our worship in the church must be regulated by the commandments that God has given in His word (**Joh 4:23-24 c/w Joh 17:17**).
 - C. God nowhere commands nor authorizes us to use musical instruments in the NT church. What happens in heaven is immaterial.

VII. Objections

1. Objection #1: Well sure there is no commandment or example in the NT to use musical instruments in the church, but God didn't tell us that we *can't* use them.
 - A. When God tells us what do to, contained within that commandment is a prohibition from doing anything different.
 - B. By telling us to use unleavened bread for communion, God has therefore prohibited us from using steak, potato chips, poptarts, celery, or ice cream for the Lord's Supper.
 - C. When God commands us to sing in church to worship Him, that excludes using musical instruments to do so.
 - D. See Section V, 2 on the argument from silence.
2. Objection #2: Musical instruments were used in worship in the Old Testament.
 - A. If this argument proves anything, it proves too much.

- B. If musical instruments are acceptable in the NT church because they were used in the OT, then so are the following:
 - i. Burning Incense (**Exo 30:7-9**)
 - ii. Observance of the Day of Atonement (**Lev 16**)
 - iii. Daily animal sacrifices (**Num 28:1-6**)
 - iv. Observance of the sabbath day (**Exo 20:8**)
 - v. A separate priesthood (**Exo 28:1**)
 - C. The Old Testament is abolished, so the only parts of it that are still binding on Christians today are the parts that were carried over into the New Testament, and instruments were not carried over (see Section V,1).
3. **Objection #3:** Miriam led the women of Israel in singing with timbrels and dancing in celebration of their deliverance from the Egyptians through the Red Sea (**Exo 15:20-21**).
- A. This was simply a celebration of God's deliverance by some of the women in Israel.
 - B. It happened after Israel finished singing the song of Moses (**Exo 15:1-19**).
 - C. Some things to remember:
 - i. Miriam was not commanded by God to play the timbrel while Israel sang the song of Moses (and it appears that she didn't do it until after the congregation was done singing).
 - ii. This was not given in the law of Moses as an example to be followed (the law had not been given to Moses yet, and using timbrels to worship God was not commanded in the law when it was later given).
 - iii. Even if using timbrels in worship was part of the law of Moses (which it was not), it was not carried over into the NT (see Section V).
 - D. If Miriam's singing with timbrels is a pattern that should be followed in the NT church, here are some of the logical implications of that.
 - i. It was only women who sang along with the timbrels, so only women should sing along with musical instruments in the NT church.
 - ii. They used only timbrels; so only timbrels (not pianos, organs, or other instruments) should be used in the NT church.
 - iii. They danced while they sang with timbrels, so church members must dance when they sing in church.
 - iv. If an error proves anything, it proves too much.
4. **Objection #4:** If it's wrong to add musical instruments to our singing, then it's wrong to use song books which are not commanded to be used.
- A. The distinction between an *aid* and an *addition* needs to be understood.
 - i. An *aid* helps us to keep the commandment.
 - ii. An *addition* adds to and changes the commandment.
 - B. God has commanded that we *sing* together in church.
 - i. When we sing, God hears *our voices*.
 - ii. Accompanying singing with musical instruments is an *addition* to the commandment.
 - a. When we sing with musical instruments, God hears *singing and the sounds of instruments*.
 - b. Therefore, the addition of instruments changes what God hears.
 - C. Using hymnals or song books are not an addition to the commandment, but an *aid* in keeping it.

- i. When we sing words from a song book, God hears only singing, which is what He commanded.
 - ii. The aid of song books therefore doesn't change what God hears.
 - D. Another example of an aid versus an addition.
 - i. Using a microphone and amplifier to help the congregation to hear the sermon is not an addition to the commandment to "preach the word", but is rather an aid to help keep the commandment.
 - ii. But for the preacher to put on a Broadway show or a skit to convey the word of God through acting would be an addition to the commandment to "preach the word."
- 5. Objection #5: I am playing an instrument in church to glorify God.
 - A. Breaking the law of God is not glorifying to God, but rather dishonoring to Him (**Rom 2:23**).
 - B. If you love God, keep His commandments (**Joh 14:15**).
 - C. We glorify God by keeping His commandments (**Joh 15:8-10**), not by breaking or disregarding them.
 - D. Since God didn't tell you to play an instrument in church, are you glorifying Him by doing so, or are you glorifying yourself?
- 6. Objection #6: Instruments help us stay in tune when we sing.
 - A. That might be true, but it does not justify breaking God's commandment.
 - B. God is pleased with a joyful noise (**Psa 98:4**), even if it doesn't sound the best.
 - C. Noise *n.* - 1. a. Loud outcry, clamour, or shouting; din or disturbance made by one or more persons.
- 7. Objection #7: Instruments make the music sound beautiful.
 - A. To you or God?
 - B. Given the fact that God only commanded us to sing in church, apparently hearing our voices alone must be beautiful to Him.
- 8. Objection #8: If we got rid of musical instruments, no one would come to our church.
 - A. If people won't come to a church because there are no musical instruments, then those people shouldn't be in church.
 - B. So kill two birds with one stone: get rid of the instruments and the goats that come to be entertained by them.
- 9. Objection #9: God has given me musical talent. Why wouldn't He want me to use it to worship Him in church?
 - A. God wants to be worshiped in spirit and in truth (**Joh 4:23-24**) exactly how He has commanded us to in the New Testament (**Mat 28:20; 1Co 11:2**).
 - B. If that argument proves anything, it proves too much.
 - i. Should a talented dairy farmer worship God by milking cows in church and drinking the milk for communion?
 - ii. Should a talented chef worship God by cooking pizza in church and eating it for the Lord's Supper?
 - iii. Should a talented podiatrist worship God by performing foot surgery on a brother while washing his feet in church?
- 10. Objection #10: God doesn't care whether we use instruments or not; He only cares about what's in our hearts.
 - A. God wants worshiped the way that He has commanded us to (**Deut 12:32**).

B. Sincerity is not a substitute for doing what God said (**Lev 10:1-2; 1Ch 13:9-10 c/w 1Ch 15:13**).

11. Objection #11: Nearly all churches use musical instruments in church, so it must be okay.

A. Popularity is not a determination of truth.

B. Most people take the broad way that leads to destruction; very few are on the narrow, righteous path (**Mat 7:13-14**).

C. In Elijah's day, the entire nation save 7,000 people were Baal worshippers (**Rom 11:4**).

D. In Noah's day the whole world was wrong (**1Pe 3:20; 2Pe 2:5**).

E. In the first century, five out of the seven churches Jesus wrote to had errors in them (**Rev 2-3**).

F. Just because nearly all churches use musical instruments doesn't make it right.

VIII. The burden of proof for having musical instruments in the NT church is on those who want them, not on those who don't.

1. Using the NT alone, please answer the following questions:

A. Which instruments should be used in the NT church?

B. How many instruments should be used?

C. What is the minimum number of instruments to be used?

D. What is the maximum number of instruments to be used?

E. Which instruments are acceptable?

F. Which instruments are not acceptable?

G. Who is to play the instruments?

2. The fact that there is no instruction in the NT regarding the use and regulation of musical instruments is further evidence that they are not to be used in church.

3. If God wanted instruments to be used in church He would have specified which, how many, and who is to play them.