

Worship in the New Testament

1 Peter 3:15 John 1:17 John 4:24

INTRODUCTION:

A. Lesson texts:

1. **1 Peter 3:15** – “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”
2. **John 1:17** – “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
3. **John 4:24** – “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”
 - a. Herein we find the correct object of worship . . . God Who is Spirit.
 - b. Herein we find the correct attitude of worship . . . Worship in spirit.
 - c. Herein we find the foundation for correct worship . . . Truth.
John 17:17 – “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

B. The word “worship” . . .

1. Occurs some 185 times in the Bible.
2. Is engaged in a minimum of some 156 times by faithful Christians.
3. Four kinds of worship are mentioned in the New Testament.
 - a. **VAIN worship.** **Matthew 15:8-9** – “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.
 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
 - b. **IGNORANT worship.** **Acts 17:22-23** – “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;
 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the one whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.’”
 - c. **TRUE worship.** **John 4:24** – “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”
4. **What is worship?** “To honor or reverence a divine being.” (Websters)
 - a. The object of worship is God!
 - b. True worship of God does not happen without effort on our part.
 - c. Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth.
 - d. In fact, the word, “worship” is a modification of an older word, “worth-ship.”
 - e. In worship . . .

1. We attribute praise, worth, honor, and glory to God.
 2. It is limited to things that God has told man to do to worship Him.
 3. It requires a proper attitude by man towards God while doing what God has directed in the Bible.
- C. Worship is not merely a physical exercise, but rather, it is spiritual as well.
1. Many go through the physical aspects of worship without concentrating on the spiritual aspects.
 2. You can have the right physical aspects but the wrong spiritual aspects.
- D. **The Bible is God’s mind in print . . .** and the Bible guides us in the right way of Worshipping God.
- E. As we discuss New Testament worship, let us remember that we do not live under the Old Testament.
1. **Colossians 2:14** – “Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”
 2. **Hebrews 10:9-10** – “Then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second.
10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
 3. Worship by Christians today comes from the New Testament and not from the Old Testament.
- F. God has revealed these items of worship for us.

WHY DO WE SING IN WORSHIP TO GOD?

- A. The act of singing is an important part of worshipping God.
1. At least one thousand times each year we participate in the singing of a Christian hymn.
 2. The word “sing” in one of its forms, appears approximately 150 times in the Bible.
- B. Purposes of Singing:
1. It is a means of teaching.
 2. It is a means of encouragement or admonition.
 3. It is a means of expressing thanksgiving to God.
 4. It is a means of communion with God.
 5. On funeral occasions . . . It is a means of expressing sympathy.
- C. Nine New Testament passages speak of singing.
1. **Matthew 26:30** – “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
 2. **Acts 16:25** – “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

3. **Romans 15:9** – “And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: ‘For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.’”
 4. **1 Corinthians 14:15** – “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.”
 5. **Ephesians 5:19** – “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - a. Sing to one another in:
 1. **Psalms**: The Psalms of David were sung by the Jews at the temple as well as by early Christians.
 2. **Hymn**: A song or ode in honor to God.
 3. **Spiritual Songs**: Odes or songs relating to spiritual things.
 4. Melody for these “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” is assigned a source . . . The hear God has created.
 - a. Melody is to be made by those singing.
 - b. The Bible tells us where the melody is to be made.
 - c. The Bible tells us that the instrument is the heart and the melody is to be made there.
 1. Melody is to be made by that which God made.
 2. Mechanical instruments are made by man.
 6. **Colossians 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.”
 7. **Hebrews 2:12** – “. . . I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”
 8. **James 5:13** – “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”
 9. **Hebrews 13:15** – “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”
- D. Every Christian should sing in worship.
1. Sing your best . . . It is for God.
 2. Sing only that which is Biblically true.
 3. Concentrate on and understand the words and thoughts you are singing.

WHY DO WE NOT USE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN OUR WORSHIP TO GOD?

- A. The question is often raised, “Why doesn’t the Church of Christ not use mechanical instruments of music in their worship services?”
- B. Basically there are four reasons.
 1. There is no command to use it.

2. There is no example of it in Christian worship when the church was first established and for centuries thereafter.
 3. The word of history is unanimous that musical instruments were not used in Christian worship during the period of direct divine direction of the church.
 4. Bible scholars of all ages and from different religious groups have believed it to be out of harmony with the Scriptures and have so expressed it.
- C. We have noted and read all nine verses in the New Testament that has to do with singing.
- D. **QUESTION: Does such a “little thing” like a piano, organ, guitar, drums, etc. really matter to God?** This is indeed a significant question that deserves a Biblical answer.
1. In three strategic places (Near the beginning of the Bible . . . Near the middle of the Bible . . . And near the end of the Bible) God warns the ages about tampering with His commandments.
 - a. **Deuteronomy 4:2** – “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”
 - b. **Proverbs 30:6** – “Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”
 - c. **Revelation 22:18-19** – “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;
 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”
 2. As we further answer our question, “Does such a ‘little thing’ like a piano, organ, guitar, drums, etc. really matter to God?, let us note from the Bible...
 - a. In Numbers 3:14, the “little matter” of fire from an unauthorized source condemned two nephews of Moses, Nadab and Abihu. Fire from Heaven came down and devoured them.
 - b. In 1 Samuel 13:13-14, the “little matter” of a few sheep and good intentions condemned King in the matter concerning God’s command for him to utterly destroy all of the Amalekites. He was rejected from being King over Israel.
 - d. In **Matthew 15:9**, the “little matter” of adding tradition to worship condemned the Pharisees. “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
 - e. **2 John 9** – “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”
- E. **QUESTION:** hasn’t there always been instrumental music in the churches?
1. The answer is no!

- a. According to the American Encyclopedia, vol. 12, p. 688, in the first apostate church, Pope Vitalian is believed to have introduced organs into the churches of Western Europe somewhere around 670.
 - b. It is significant that there were no instruments used in worship for over 650 years after the church was established and its introduction caused great turmoil.
 - c. In the minds of early Christians instrumental music was associated with paganism.
2. Mechanical instruments of music are made by the hands of men. The heart is made by God. **Ephesians 5:19** – “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART to the Lord.”
- F. Early religious leaders condemned instrumental music in worship.
1. **John Wesley** . . . Methodist . . . “I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither seen nor heard.”
 2. **John Calvin** . . . Presbyterian . . . “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 other shadows of the law.”
 3. **Joseph Bingham** . . . Church of England . . . “Music in the church is as ancient as the apostles; but instrumental music is not.”
 4. **Adam Clarke** . . . Methodist . . . writing on page 686 in Vol. 4 of *Clark’s Commentary*, said: I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (musical instruments) productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had no 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.”
- G. The early church used only vocal music.
1. **Dr. Curt Sachs**, Columbia University, and one of the most eminent musicologists of our time, said: “All ancient Christian music was vocal.”
 2. **Richard Wagner**, quoted in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol 10, said: “There is no doubt but that those qualities absolutely necessary to church music, namely, modesty, dignity, and soulfulness, are most inherent in the vocal style than in any other. Reserve and humble restraint befits the house of God . . . That vocal music is in general more expressive than the mechanically produced tones of instruments is undeniable. Religious feeling finds its most natural expression in vocal utterance for the human heart is the source of both devotion and song.”
 3. **Lyman Coleman**, writing on pages 370 and 371 of the book, *The Primitive Church*, said: “Both the Jews in their temple service and the Greeks in their idol worship were accustomed to singing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity must have been familiar with this mode of singing, but it is generally admitted that the primitive

Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship. Neither Ambrose or Basil, nor Chrysostom in their noble encomiums which they severally pronounce upon music make any mention of instrumental music. Basil condemns it as ministering only to the depraved passions of men.”

4. **J. N. Brown**, on page 1702 of Vol. 2 of *The Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, said: In the Greek church the organ never came into use, but after the eighth century it became common in the Latin church, not, however, without opposition from the side of the Monks . . . The reformed church discarded it, and in other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation.”
- I. Arguments made in defense of the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship services.
1. **“I don’t see any harm in it.”**
 - a. This is viewing the issue from a natural viewpoint, and not from the Biblical standpoint. Spiritual things must be judged by the spiritual standard of the Bible.
 - b. There is harm in it.
 1. It has divided the religious world.
 2. It has caused trouble in nearly every religious group.
 3. It discourages congregational singing.
 4. It makes worship vain. **Matthew 15:9** – “. **“And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”**
 2. **“The Bible doesn’t say not to use them.”**
 - a. Such adherents overlook God’s Law of Exclusion in the Bible. That is . . . When God says something a certain way, it excludes everything else.
 - b. Examples:
 1. Ark of gopher wood. Not elm . . . Not oak . . . Not cedar.
 2. Fruit of the vine. Not coffee . . . Not milk . . . Not Pepsie Cola
 3. Making melody in your heart . . . Not on a piano . . . Not on an organ . . . etc.
 3. **“I like it and it sounds good.”**
 - a. In the worship service, whom are we trying to please . . . God . . . or ourselves?
 - b. Just because people do a thing doesn’t make it acceptable to God.
 1. This is vain worship. **Matthew 15:9**
 2. In our worship services we are striving to please God in rather than men.
 3. Music here is worship . . . not an art.
 4. It is not what pleases us but rather what pleases God that counts.
 4. **“It was used in the Old Testament.”**

- a. The question is often asked, ‘Were musical instruments used in the Old Testament?’ The proper Biblical answer is yes, they were used in the Old Testament.
 1. The word “music” appears 17 times in the Old Testament.
 2. The word “instruments” appears 45 times in the Old Testament.
 3. The term, “stringed instruments” appear some 25 times in the Old Testament.
 4. The word “cymbals” appears some 16 times in the Old Testament.
 5. The words “harp” or “harps” appears some 49 times in the Old Testament,
 - a. “Harp” – 32 times
 - b. “Harps” – 17 times
 6. The word “flute” appears 9 times. Its plural form appears an additional 6 times.
- b. Yes, instruments of music were used in the Old Testament . . . Even at the temple in Jerusalem. Other things were used in the Old Testament as well. Among them:
 1. Animal sacrifices were used for religious purposes at both the Tabernacle and the Temple . . . But not in the New Testament.
 2. The burning of incense was used as well . . . But not in the New Testament.
- c. The fact that these things were used in the Old Testament does not justify their use in the New Testament..
 1. **Colossians 2:14** – “Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”
 2. **Hebrews 10:9-10** – “Then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second.
 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
 3. **Hebrews 7:12** – “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.”
 4. We are not under the Old Testament law or its system of doing things. But rather, worship by Christians today comes from the New Testament and not from the Old Testament.
- d. We are under Christ . . . Not Moses . . . Not David . . . Not any other.
 1. Christ has all authority. Matthew 28:18
 2. God commands in **Matthew 17:5** – “. . . Hear Him.”
 3. We are to worship as the New Testament teaches.

- J. “Music” is a generic term . . . “Sing” is a specific term.
1. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek . . . The commonly-spoken Greek.
 2. In Koinie Greek, “Psallo” means specifically singing without instrumental accompaniment.
 3. God had a reason for using “Psallo” in Paul’s writing.
 4. Therefore, from a logical standpoint:
 - a. “Psallo” . . . Either it includes the instrument or it does not.
 1. If not, we should leave it out.
 2. If it includes it, we must use it.
 - b. Listening friends, we should interpret Ephesians 5:19 as Paul and the early Christians practiced it . . . And sing using our voices as the church in the 1st century did by God’s commands.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Listening friends, we have scriptural reasons for not using it . . .
Denominations only have human reasons for using it.