



Instrumental Music in Worship



Does It Matter How We Worship?

- Pleasing worship is offered by faith
(Genesis 4:3-5, Hebrews 11:4)
- Pleasing worship is based on God's word
(Leviticus 9:21-10:3)
- If not, our worship is in vain (Matthew 15:7-9)



Old Covenant Instruments

- Established in temple worship by God's command (1 Chron. 28:19)

¹¹ Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch *of the temple*, its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, its inner rooms and the room for the mercy seat; ¹² and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the LORD, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storehouses of the house of God and for the storehouses of the dedicated things; ¹³ also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD and for all the utensils of service in the house of the LORD...

¹⁹ "All *this*," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern."

1 Chronicles 28:11-13, 19 NASB95



Old Covenant Instruments

- Established in temple worship by God's command (1 Chron. 28:19)
- Specific instruments and their players were identified (1 Chron. 25:1,6)
- Solomon implemented this plan with God's approval (2 Chron. 5:11-14)



Following the Pattern

- Jehoiada the priest (2 Chron. 23:18)

¹⁸ Moreover, Jehoiada placed the offices of the house of the LORD under the authority of the Levitical priests, **whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD**, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses—**with rejoicing and singing according to the order of David**.

2 Chronicles 23:18 NASB95



Following God's Pattern

- Jehoiada the priest (2 Chron. 23:18)
- Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:25)

²⁵ He then stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with harps and with lyres, according to the command of David and of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for the command was from the LORD through His prophets.

2 Chronicles 29:25 NASB95



Following God's Pattern

- Jehoiada the priest (2 Chron. 23:18)
- Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:25)
- Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:10)

¹⁰ Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, **to praise the LORD according to the directions of King David of Israel.**

Ezra 3:10 NASB95



Following God's Pattern

- Jehoiada the priest (2 Chron. 23:18)
- Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:25)
- Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:10)
- Nehemiah (Neh. 12:45-46)

⁴⁵ For they performed the worship of their God and the service of purification, together with the singers and the gatekeepers in accordance with the command of David *and of his son Solomon*. ⁴⁶ For in the days of David and Asaph, in ancient times, *there were* leaders of the singers, songs of praise and hymns of thanksgiving to God.

Nehemiah 12:45-46 NASB95



Old Covenant Instruments

- Communicated by God as part of Israel's worship
- Not a matter of preference, judgment, or style but obedience to God's command
- This pattern followed by those returning to true worship of God



New Covenant Instruments

- The Old can no longer be our standard (Hebrews 8:4-6, 13)

⁴ Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; ⁵ who serve **a copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “SEE,” He says, “THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.” ⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

Hebrews 8:4-6 NASB95

¹³ When He said, "A new *covenant*," **He has made the first obsolete**. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

⁹ Now even the first *covenant* had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.

Hebrews 8:13-9:1 NASB95



New Covenant Instruments

- The Old can no longer be our standard (Hebrews 8:4-6, 13)
- Jesus brings a new order of worship “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:19-24)

¹⁹ The woman *said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." ²¹ Jesus *said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But an hour is coming, and now is, **when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."**

John 4:19-24NASB95



New Covenant Instruments

- The Old can no longer be our standard (Hebrews 8:4-6, 13)
- Jesus brings a new order of worship “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:19-24)
- The NT is completely silent on instruments in worship

- Contents [hide]
- (Top)
- Early history
- ▼ Religious origins
 - Christian
 - Byzantine Rite
 - Opposition to instruments in worship**
 - Acceptance of instruments in worship
 - Jewish
- ▼ In the United States
 - Recording artists
 - Musical theatre
 - Barbershop style
 - Amateur and high school
- ▼ In other countries
 - Afghanistan
 - Iran
 - Pakistan

Opposition to instruments in worship [edit]

Present-day Christian religious bodies known for conducting their worship services without musical accompaniment include many [Oriental Orthodox Churches](#) (such as the [Coptic Orthodox Church](#)),^[13] many [Anabaptist](#) communities (including [Old Order Anabaptist groups](#)—such as the [Amish](#), [Old German Baptist Brethren](#), [Old Order Mennonites](#), as well as Conservative Anabaptist groups—such as the [Dunkard Brethren Church](#) and [Conservative Mennonites](#)),^[14] some [Presbyterian](#) churches devoted to the [regulative principle of worship](#), [Old Regular Baptists](#), [Primitive Baptists](#), [Plymouth Brethren](#), [Churches of Christ](#), Church of God (Guthrie, Oklahoma), the [Reformed Free Methodists](#),^[15] [Doukhobors](#), and the [Byzantine Rite](#) of Eastern Christianity. Certain [high church](#) services and other musical events in liturgical churches (such as the Roman Catholic [Mass](#) and the [Lutheran Divine Service](#)) may be a cappella, a practice remaining from apostolic times. Many [Mennonites](#) also conduct some or all of their services without instruments. [Sacred Harp](#), a type of [folk music](#), is an a cappella style of religious singing with [shape notes](#), usually sung at singing conventions.

Opponents of [musical instruments in the Christian worship](#) believe that such opposition is supported by the Christian scriptures and Church history. The scriptures typically referenced are Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12, 13:15 and James 5:13,^[16] which show examples and exhortations for Christians to sing.^[17]

There is no reference to instrumental music in early church worship in the New Testament, or in the worship of churches for the first six centuries.^{[18][19]} Several reasons have been posited throughout church history for the absence of instrumental music in church worship.^[nb 1]

Christians who believe in a cappella music today believe that in the Israelite worship assembly during Temple worship only the Priests of Levi sang, played, and offered animal sacrifices, whereas in the church era, all Christians are commanded to sing praises to God. They believe that if God wanted instrumental music in New Testament worship, He would have commanded not just singing, but singing and playing like he did in the Hebrew scriptures.

Instruments have divided Christendom since their introduction into worship. They were considered a Roman Catholic innovation, not widely practiced until the 18th century, and were opposed vigorously in worship by a number of [Protestant Reformers](#), including [Martin Luther](#) (1483–1546),^[21] [Ulrich Zwingli](#), [John Calvin](#) (1509–1564)^[22] and [John Wesley](#) (1703–1791).^[23] Alexander Campbell referred to the use of an instrument in worship as "a cow bell in a concert".^[24] In [Sir Walter Scott's](#) *The Heart of Midlothian*, the heroine, [Jeanie Deans](#), a Scottish Presbyterian, writes to her father about the church situation she has found in England (bold added):



The Music God Wants

- Singing with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15)

¹⁵ What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

1 Corinthians 14:15 NASB95



The Music God Wants

- Singing with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15)
- Singing to teach spiritual truths (Col. 3:16)

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom **teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16 NASB95



The Music God Wants

- Singing with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15)
- Singing to teach spiritual truths (Col. 3:16)
- Singing to make music in our hearts (Eph. 5:18-20)

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord**; ²⁰ always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

Ephesians 5:18-20 NASB95