

"...I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:23)

Conclusion...

Consider well the subject before you. It is more than just a preference. We are dealing with the law of God. Such is a serious matter. Especially as we look around at the number of people claiming to serve God with an instrument of music. Instrumental music cannot be authorized by God's word, and is therefore sinful.

NEWSWORTHY NOTES:

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PLUCKING AT HARPS
(or Harping on Plucking)
by Bob Pulliam

Finding a way to justify something from the Bible is only a perversion of scripture away. It is very easy to want that which God has not authorized, and with a little diligence, one can twist scriptures to argue the point in one's favor. But the Bible is a wonderfully coherent message with thorough unity in doctrinal matters. The subject of music in worship is no different.

Last week we noted how silence in the scriptures does not give license to man's devices. God has specified what He wants (*i.e.* singing, vocal music). This excludes every other means of rendering music (*i.e.* instrumental music). As noted above, mankind cannot be satisfied with this. Many feel compelled to find justification for instrumental music in worship. This is their way of confessing that religious practices must be authorized by the scriptures. Their failure in proving the acceptability of such before God is apparent to the open minded. Note the following three arguments used vehemently in their battle for the use of the instrument:

*It Was Used In Worship
Before the New Testament Era...*

Perhaps all have heard the "*but David played a harp*" argument. And it sounds convincing until you give the matter further thought! Think

about the other things that were done under the Old Testament system:

- Animal sacrifices to atone for sins.
- Daily sacrifices and peace offerings.
- Tabernacle & Temple (entire nation going to one location) worship.
- Polygamy (Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines).
- Several sins (including the rebellious child) were capital crimes (death penalty).

People are happy that they are not under the Old Testament when they see what it was all about. Ironically, people who should be happy with what the New Testament offers, run back to the Old Testament to grab something that pleases them. David's use of a harp does not justify the use of instrumental music, any more than it justifies the sacrifice of animals (I Kgs 24:25).

A less common argument is that God never commanded instrumental music under the Old Testament, but was pleased with it when it was offered by men. Ignored by this is II Chronicles 29:25, which notes the appointment of such by the command of God's prophets (inspired men who spoke God's word). We don't have the writings of Gad or Nathan; nor do we have the writings of many prophets who were before them. This passage, however, tells us that instrumental music was a part of God's will under the Old Testament law. It was "the commandment of the Lord". Now all we need is the same commandment of the Lord in the New Testament. But it is not there! God remained silent on such. Yet He has commanded vocal music!

The Harps In Revelation...

Harps are mentioned several times in the book of Revelation (Rev 5:8; 14:2; 15:2). From this an argument is formed that goes like this: "Harps are instruments of music, and use in Revelation gives consent to their use in our worship." But consider two aspects of the harps in Revelation:

1. The book of Revelation is a book of symbolism. The harps are a symbol of praise, not an element of authorized worship.
2. Also note that the harps are used by *heavenly beings in heaven!* This is not a description of what was done by the first century church. And need we point out all of the other things heavenly beings do in the book of Revelation?

The harps in Revelation is perhaps the least compelling argument of the bunch.

The Psallo Argument...

A very common argument is one which falls back on the meaning of a Greek word in Ephesians 5:19. The word is *psallo* (pronounced -saw-low), and is translated "making melody" in the English. We are told that the word *psallo* means to pluck or twang, and was used of plucking strings on an instrument to produce musical sounds.

Let us, for the sake of argument, grant that this was the intention of Paul in this passage. What is the demanded action? Remembering that the command is to *all*, then *all* must sing *and* play an instrument. There is no piano player for the group, for *all* must sing and make melody (pluck or twang - play an instrument). There is an axiom of interpretation which says: That which proves too much, proves nothing at all. Obviously, this argument has "proven too much".

Something rarely noted is that the instrument to be played was always named when the word *psallo* was used. Here the instrument is named: the heart. The music we offer to God is to be an offering of the lips and the heart. That which proceeds from the lips is to be a result of plucking or twanging the heart (We have a similar expression today. We speak of something tugging at the heart strings).

The Psallo Argument is perhaps the most compelling of the arguments for instrumental music; and yet it falls flat on it's face with a simple examination of it's validity.

The Logical End Of Lawlessness...

Instrumental music is upheld on the grounds that God's word doesn't say not to use it. How many other things could be justified on such grounds? Would you like to see hot dogs and Coke on the Lord's table? How about clowns in the class rooms (and a few in the pulpit, as well)? What about funds raised by bazaars and raffles? These things are being done (as I'm sure you are aware). How do such things get started?... By abandoning the law of God. Jesus had something to say about such matters:

"...in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9)

And Jesus said that in the judgment,