

The Church of Christ Music in the Assembly Hebrews 2:9-12

J. W. Pitts, Jr. - Minister
Woodland Park Church of Christ

Observations

- One of the differences our friends notice when they worship with us for the first time is the absence of familiar sounds like the piano, keyboards, drums, organs or guitars
- Instead, the familiar sound that is obvious, is **VOICES.....but just VOICES**
- **Our musical praise is 100% “A Cappella”**

Observations

- Most visitors who encounter non-instrumental worship find it to be a strange practice
- But to Christians who worshipped in the time of the New Testament writings, and for a thousand years afterwards, “A Cappella” was the only method of worship music in the church of Christ assembly
- “A Cappella” actually means “as in the chapel”
- Music heard historically in Christian houses of worship or chapels was **vocal only**

The Why Question

- Why did most Christians throughout early history practice vocal-only praise when they gathered for worship?
- Why do we in the churches of Christ still do that ?

It's Our Belief That God Is In Charge of Every Element of His Worship

We Believe That God Alone Has The Authority to Decide Whether Or Not to Use Instruments!

We Are Not Alone

As Non Instrumentalists

- A Catholic split around the year 1054 called “the Great Schism” took place
- Roman Catholics split into two great empires, the western Roman Catholic church and the “Eastern Orthodox Church”
- One of the reasons for the split is that the Eastern Orthodox Church wanted to remain committed to “A Cappella” music in worship as the early church fathers taught and Roman Catholics didn’t
- The Eastern Orthodox Church membership is estimated at approximately 250 million
- Protestants like John Calvin and Huldreich Zwingli
- Catholic theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas

“The Church does not use musical instruments such as the harp or lyre when praising God, in case she should seem to fall back into Judaism.....”

...For musical instruments usually move the soul more to pleasure than create inner moral goodness.....

“Worship Through the Ages”

Nick Needham

Instruments Were Used In Tabernacle Worship, in the Old Testament

The Lord spoke further to Moses, saying, “Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp.”

“And the sons of Aaron the priests, shall blow with the trumpets....”

“Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed feasts, and on the first days of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings...”

Numbers 10:1-2, 8,10

Numbers 10:1-2,8

... “and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be as a reminder of you before God. I am the Lord your God.”

- **These scriptures suggest that God decided in tabernacle worship what He wanted**
- **I can't imagine Moses arguing that he was free to add two or three more trumpeters**
- **I can't imagine Moses believing he had the authority to get rid of the trumpets God had instructed**

Old Testament Temple Worship

- Years later when God's people were permanently settled in the Promised Land, the capital city was Jerusalem, the center of public worship moved from the tabernacle to the temple
- Under King David's oversight this is what we find in 1 Chronicles 16:4-6, during the transition
“Then he (David) appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel.”

1 Chronicles 16:4-6

“Asaph was the chief, and second to him Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of the God

Look at 1 Chronicles 23:1-5

“When David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel. David assembled all the leaders of Israel and the priests and Levites. The Levites, thirty years old and upward, were numbered, and the total was 38,000 men...”

1 Chronicles 23:1-5

“Twenty-four thousand of these,” David said, “shall have charge of the work in the house of the Lord, 6,000 shall be officers and judges, 4,000 gatekeepers, and 4,000 shall offer praise to the Lord with the instruments that I have made for praise.”

Why Did David Add More Instruments To Their Worship?

- Was it because he didn't like trumpets only in worship?
- Did he think that adding more musical instrument variety added to their worship experience?
- The Answer is in the Bible.
- When Hezekiah became king, approximately 300 years after David, he sought to restore temple worship long after a period of neglect and decay by God's people

2 Chronicles 29:25

“He (Hezekiah) stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the command of David..... for the commandment was from the Lord through his prophets

- **GOD** commanded David to bring the instruments in, therefore, Hezekiah followed the Lord’s commands
- Hezekiah’s instructions for temple worship came from the same source as David’s instructions and Moses’ commands for tabernacle worship

GOD!

What Did Nehemiah Do When It Was His Time To Restore Temple Worship? 500 Years Later!

Nehemiah 12:24, 45

“And the leaders of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua son of Kadmiel, and their associates, who stood opposite them to give prayer and thanksgiving, one section responding to the other as prescribed by David the man of God.”

Nehemiah 12:45

“They performed service for their God and the service of purification, as did also the musicians and gatekeepers, according to the commands of David and his son Solomon.”

- So Nehemiah understood what Hezekiah and David believed

Instruments were under God’s authority alone

It was important that they followed the instructions already outlined by their predecessors for instruments in worship to God

What is the Point?

- Followers of God in scripture would consult the instructions of those to whom God's plan for worshipping Him was revealed, then precisely follow those plans without adding or subtracting from those plans
- Tabernacle worshippers consulted Moses' instructions
- Temple worshippers consulted David's instructions
- Christian worshippers should consult the Apostles' instructions , Acts 2:42 *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

Listen to the Apostle Paul Writing to the Corinthian Church About Assembly

When Speaking in Different Languages Was Active and a Popular Gift in the 1st Century, He Established Clear Rules For It!

“If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.” If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.”

1 Corinthians 14:37-38

Observations

Since God revealed His plans for Christian worship through His apostles, when it came to musical instruments, believers throughout history simply asks:

“What musical instruments do the apostles command us to use?”

The answer is None!

Observations

- As Church Reformers throughout history have combed the pages of the New Testament they have found these scriptures about singing and praising God

Ephesians 5:19

Colossians 3:16

James 5:13

- Believers Praising Christ in song

Acts 16:25

1 Corinthians 14:15

But Not Even A Hint Of An Instrument In Worship!

*Since God Didn't Place
Any Instruments In
Christian Worship, We
Are Not Going To Bring
Any In!*



***Most Churches of Christ
Believe That This
Historic Christian
Approach Is
Theologically Sound***

The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins Acts 17:30

Confess Christ Acts 8:37

Be Baptized Acts 2:38