

## Instrumental Music In Worship: Right Or Wrong?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Generally, the world frowns on those who refuse to use mechanical instruments of music in their worship; but with those who truly follow Christ, it is a matter of principle, and respect for God's authority. Let us examine some reasons why people use music.

There are those who attempt to justify the use of mechanical instruments in Christian worship upon the grounds that they like it. But in worship unto God we must be concerned about what God likes, not what we like. In worship we are seeking to please God, not ourselves. In His book, He has told us what will please Him, and the only way we can please Him is to do what He says in the way that He says (**John 4:23-24**).

Look at this argument, all things which I like are things which may be used in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship is a thing which I like. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. Using this logic, I like Raisin Brand, toast and coffee, but I have no scriptural right to add these to the Lord's Supper just because I like them.

There are those who contend that if mechanical instrumental music may be used in the home that it may also be used in worship. Look with me at this argument. All things which are right to have in the home are things which are right to have in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music is a thing which is right to have in the home. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which is right to have in Christian worship. Many things are permissible and wholesome in domestic settings that would be out of place in worship. Paul recognized this when he prohibited a mixing and mingling of a common meal and the Lord's supper (**1 Cor. 11:20ff**). Steak, potatoes, gravy, biscuits, tea and dessert are all right in a home setting on a dining table; they would constitute sin if placed on the Lord's Table, instead of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. Games, ping pong or playing video games are all right in the home setting but would be sinful if made into worship elements.

It is frequently claimed that we can have mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship because there is going to be instrumental music in heaven. *"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps"* (**Rev. 14:2**). Let us look at this argument. All things which John heard in heaven are things which may be used in Christian worship. Harpers harping with their harps is a thing which John heard in heaven. Therefore, harpers harping with their harps is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. In the first, place John did not hear harpers. The record says that John heard a voice; the voice was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps. John saw horses; what about riding horseback in Christian worship? *"And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection"* (**Luke 20:34-36**). There will be no marriage in heaven. Does this mean a

Christian man or woman who is married can't be in the church here on earth? No faith, no hope in heaven; does this mean there is no faith or hope in the church?

Many contend that mechanical instrument music may be employed in Christian worship upon the ground that "*David had it.*" Let us look at this argument. Mechanical instrumental music in worship is a thing which David practiced. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be practiced in Christian worship. David offered animal sacrifices to God. Can we offer animal sacrifices in our worship? David practiced polygamy. Is the Christian authorized to? What if a man would justify the use of instruments by the Law of Moses? Here is the answer from Paul: "*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*" (**Gal. 5:4**).

Many contend that mechanical instrumental music in worship is authorized upon the ground that the Bible does not say, "*Don't have it.*" All things which the Bible does not specifically say "Don't have" are things which may be used in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music in worship is a thing which it does not specifically say "Don't have." Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing may be used in Christian worship. So, it's alright for me while preaching to hit a bucket of golf balls? Or put a basketball hoop up, and shoot baskets while preaching? The Bible does not say "*Don't have it.*" What a silly argument. The Bible authorized by what it says, "*NOT*" what it does not say (**1 Pet. 4:11**). When God explicitly told Noah to build an ark out of gopher wood (**Gen. 6:14**), it implicitly excluded using any other kind. Noah would have been in violation of God's will to use pine, for God did not authorize it. It was sin that caused the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Israel's first high priest. The Lord had prescribed the kind of fire to be used in offerings (**Lev. 6:10-13**). This was no secret, yet: "*Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD*" (**Lev. 10:1-2**). After God specifically designated the fire, they could presumptuously say, "*But he didn't say not to!*" But that one case of logic cost them their lives! Since the New Testament, in several passages (**Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13**), specifies singing in Christian worship, it would be a violation to offer any other kind of music (instrumental) in the use of spiritual songs. Christians are not governed by the idea that we can do anything and everything in matters of religion which the Bible does not specifically condemn. Rather, we are governed by the divine principle that we can do only that which is authorized by the Bible.

While it is true that the Law was nailed to the cross (**Col. 2:14**), some hold that this did not affect the Psalms; the Psalms were not nailed to the cross. All things which the Psalms authorized are things which may be employed in Christian worship. Can we practice the dance in Christian worship because it was authorized by (**Psa. 150**)? Can we offer animal sacrifices in Christian worship (**Psa. 66:13**)? The truth of the matter is, the word "Law" refers to the whole Old Testament scriptures, including the Psalms. Notice these verses:

*“Jesus answered them, **Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?**” (John 10:34). “I have said, **Ye are gods;** and all of you are children of the most High” (Psa. 82:6). “But this cometh to pass, **that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause**” (John 12:34). “Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that **hate me without a cause**” (Psa. 35:19).*

The scriptures teach us to sing (**Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Jas. 5:13**). No scripture authorizes instrumental music in worship today; it cannot be found. Therefore, those who use musical instruments in the worship today violate the Lord’s will. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (**Rom. 10:17**). “...For whatsoever is not of faith is sin”(**Rom. 14:23**). Therefore, those who use instrumental music in worship are sinning!