

About Music What We Believe

The question "Does it matter what kind of music we use in our worship offered to God?" is the theme of many discussions throughout the religious world. Even among brethren in the church of Christ, the question of music has caused concern, doubt, and harsh feelings. Those in denominational organizations using books other than the Bible as their authority vote for the types of songs to be sung and if instrumental accompaniment is needed. They look at members of the church of Christ and criticize our "stubborn nature" and unwillingness to change. They ask, "Why do we allow only unaccompanied congregational singing in our worship?"

The Law of Moses required two trumpets to be made and used to call Israel together. They were never used in worship. *"Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out. When both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the doorway of the tent of meeting"* (Numbers 10:2-3). Often, the authority quoted by organizations for using instruments in today's worship is from David in the book of Psalms. David's instruments began when the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle were separated, and worship was divided between the two. That separation also required new orders of the priesthood. The people never used musical instruments in the assembly of Israel.

The requirement for singing in worship when Messiah reigns is seen in the prophets and the New Testament. Through Isaiah, God said, *"Then you will say on that day, **I will give thanks to You, O LORD; For although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, And You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.**" Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation. And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted." **Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth. Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel"** (Isaiah 12:1-6).*

During Messiah's reign, we are commanded to sing just as Isaiah predicted. *"Speaking to one another in **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father"** (Ephesians 5:19-20). This verse gives us both the method of making music and what type of songs we use. *"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).**

We see from the above passages that both the prophet and apostle make it clear that we are to sing. Paul adds advice in writing to the Corinthians, "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). Combining prayer and singing with Spirit and mind, Paul shows the necessity to understand the lessons of the Holy Spirit and express them through prayer and singing. Remember, Jesus said, *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life"* (John 6:63). And when Jesus asked if His disciples would leave Him, Peter responded, *"Lord, to whom shall we go?"*

You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Instruments cannot convey words. Only the voice can, and the singing voice carries them and aids in remembering them.

Jesus and the Eleven sang a hymn before they departed the upper room before His arrest (Matthew 26:30). The hosts of heaven sang praises to the risen Christ when He ascended to the throne (Revelation 5:9, 14:3). The physical instruments made by people will be destroyed when Christ returns (2 Peter 3:10), and only the voices of the saved will remain to make music through eternity (Revelation 14:1-5).

Singing is the only kind of music that fits the requirements for music in the church. By definition, a hymn is a song of praise. By tradition, the song sung by Jesus in the upper room was from the paschal hymns of (Psalms 113 - 118 and 136). Therefore the primary reason to sing is to praise The Lord. Second, singing sends words of teaching, encouragement, and advice to each other (Colossians 3:16). And third, singing enriches and fills one's self with the Word of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:17-19). Singing allows us to reach upward toward God, outward to others, and inward to renew faith in the Word.

The Bible is our guide to all God wants us to know about Him and His spiritual realm. God's Word is truth (John 17:17) and the only rational teaching we can believe. Therefore, we sing praises, as do those around the throne.

What praise do you offer?