

The Vincennes Voice

“...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight...” (Matt. 3:3)

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THE USE OF MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP

Larry R. Ping II

If there is one thing most folks know about the “church of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), it is the fact we do not utilize mechanical instruments as we worship God (Jn. 4:24). More than knowing this, some question why this is our practice. Ponder these thoughts.

1) Establishing The Right Question. In addressing this issue, it is important the accurate query is posed. It is not, “Why do you not have music,” nor is it, “Why do you not have instrumental music?” Both questions contain inaccuracies. We certainly musically worship God, and as we do, we make “melody in” our “heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). The heart is the instrument involved in our musical worship.

Accurately, the question should be, “Why do you not use mechanical instruments in worship?” This is a fine Bible question worthy of a full Bible answer. Why not fully reflect upon these Bible teachings?

2) Mechanical Instrumental Music Was Commanded In The Law of Moses. Many wish to point out mechanical instruments were used in the time of the Law of Moses. Such is true. However, it was not something the people decided to add on their own. David penned, “Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob” (Psa. 81:1-4). It must be noted mechanical instrumental music was not a suggestion for improved worship. It was commanded by God, and a part of the Law of Moses.

3) The Law Of Moses Was Nailed To The Cross. Several places in the New Testament indicate what happened to the Law of Moses. Paul wrote “Blotting

out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col. 2:14). To the Ephesians he penned, “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Eph. 2:15). It was simply noted to the Romans, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). The writer of Hebrews recorded, “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth” (Heb. 9:16-17). The “new covenant” (Heb. 8:13) serves as Jesus’ last will and testament. It contains His commands, His rewards, and their stipulations. It is to this new covenant we must turn in order to confirm our worship is done in authorized ways (Col. 3:17). (cont.)

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4) The New Testament Commands Singing. As the New Testament is our source of authority today, it is to its words we turn to discover how we are instructed to musically worship God. Paul commanded, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). Similarly, Paul ordered, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). There are other verses indicating the need for singing: Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 14:15; Heb. 2:12; Jam. 5:13. One can search the breadth of the New Testament and not find one verse commanding Christians to play or pluck any string of any mechanical instrument.

5) When God Specified To Sing, He Eliminated Every Other Possibility. This is a true principle of any specific order

of God. For instance, when God commanded Noah to “Make thee an ark of gopher wood” (Gen. 6:14), He eliminated all other woods. Additionally, when Paul ordered churches to give “upon the first day of the week” (I Cor. 16:2), he eliminated all other days.

So then, when God specified to “sing” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), He eliminated all other kinds of music.

6) The Bible Warns About Adding To God’s Word. Moses penned, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Dte. 4:2). Not long after, He wrote, “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Dte. 12:32). The wise man warned, “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:6). The last warning of the Bible iterates “For I testify unto

every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19). Which man reading these words feels comfortable adding to God’s Word?

7) The Rest Is Up To You! I have reserved the space below for you. In it, write down every verse in the New Testament which commands the use of mechanical instruments in worship. How many can you find?

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm