

Arlington Church of Christ

Wednesday Night

Bible Study

Music in the Church

Following the Scriptural Trail



WHY DO

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

.....NOT USE.....

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ?



John 4:23-24 Jesus said:

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

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In the Spirit – with one's mind and inner being

In truth - according to God's Word and instructions

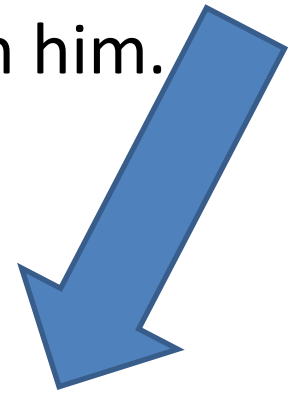
John 17:17

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth

The purpose of our singing:

Colossians 3:16-17

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



According to the instructions of and by the authority of

So whatever we do in worship to God **MUST** be according to (by the authority) of His Word if our worship is to be acceptable to the Lord.

Remember that we are now under the authority of the new Covenant, and so must look to it for our instructions.

Matthew 15:8-9

““These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”

Matthew 26:30

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Acts 16:25

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Romans 15:9-11

and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.” ¹⁰ Again, it says, “Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.” ¹¹ And again, “Sing praises to the Lord, all you Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 14:15-16

So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.¹⁶ Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying?

We need to understand the meanings of the words in the songs we sing if we are to praise God acceptably.

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Night with 'ebon pinion' ? Means 'black wings' and indicates a dark moonless night



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Here I raise my **Ebenezer** ?

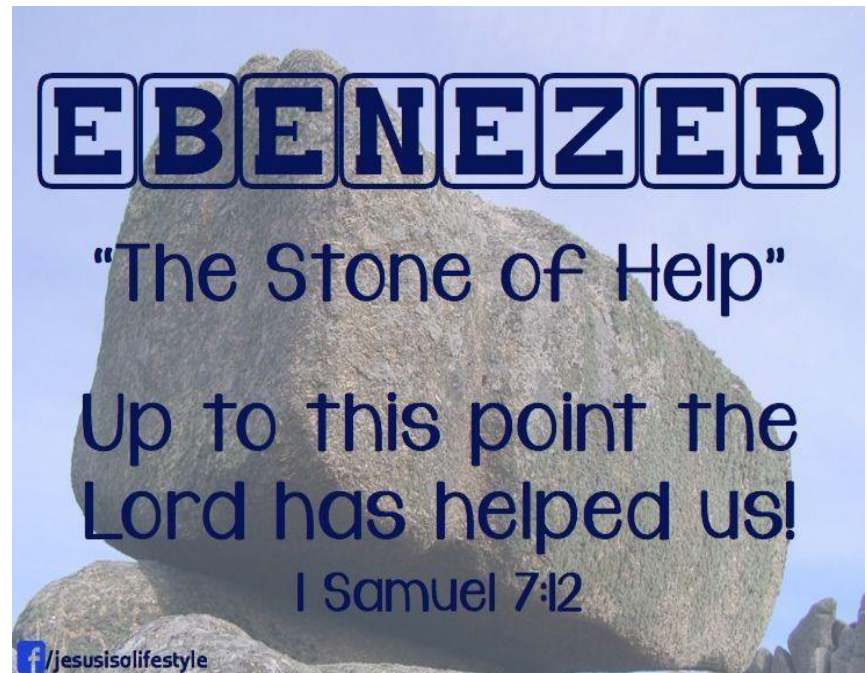
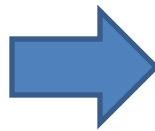


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Here I raise my ‘Ebenezer’ ?

It is a stone set up as a memorial of God’s help



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Along the coastline, there would be a lighthouse for direction and smaller (lower) lights along the shoreline for guidance of ships.



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One of the purposes of singing is to teach those who don't understand. That is why we must use words that can be understood. An instrument makes sounds, but can not 'teach' anything. Someone who is not familiar with certain tunes would not have words 'brought to mind' by simply hearing the music.

1 Corinthians 14:26

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, **each of you has a hymn**, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

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Ephesians 5:19

speaking to one another with psalms, hymns,
and songs from the Spirit. **Sing and make music**
in your heart to the Lord,

Hebrews 2:12

He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly **I will sing your praises.**

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James 5:13

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.

Revelation 14:2-3

And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. ³ And they sang (ado) a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

sang = Greek 'Ado' --- singing only, never playing instruments

Revelation 15:1-3

I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues. ² And I saw what looked like **a sea of glass glowing with fire** and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. **They held harps given them by God** ³ **and sang (ado) the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb:**

Is there a 'literal sea of glass' in heaven (remember Revelation is a book of symbols) – **no it is a sign, a symbol of God's peace – in the same way – the 'harps' are symbolic of the melodious peaceful songs of the saved.**

Colossians 4:5-6

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Some say – It doesn't say that I CAN'T use instruments - you can ask :

**Can a person worship without using instruments?
If so, then why do something that is not specifically authorized?**

We know we ARE specifically told not to add to God's words or take away from them !

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- => Instruments were introduced by Pope Vitalian in the seventh century, but not used until the eight century and then only in the “Western branch” of the Catholic church.**
- => It has always been met with great opposition in the worship from its earliest introduction.**
- => There are three Greek words used in the New Testament to refer to ‘music’. They are **ado, humneo, and psallo**. Each has a different meaning.**

'ado' = to sing or chant

'humneo' = to sing as a hymn or religious song

'Psallo' : (Lexicons often have all four meanings)

-originally meant to 'pull out and twang as a bowstring or carpenters line'

-came to refer to plucking the strings of a harp

- by the time of David , meant 'singing while playing at the same time', as for the psalms.

-by New Testament times, it had no instrumental connotation at all, just singing

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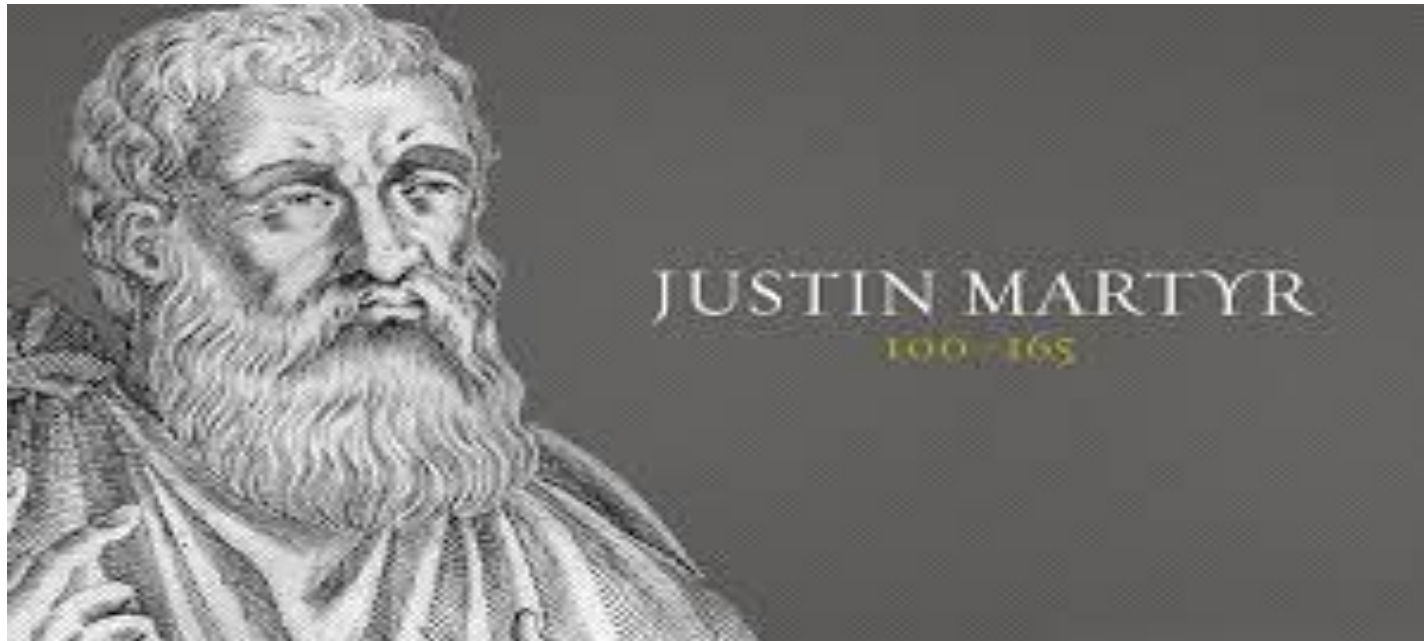
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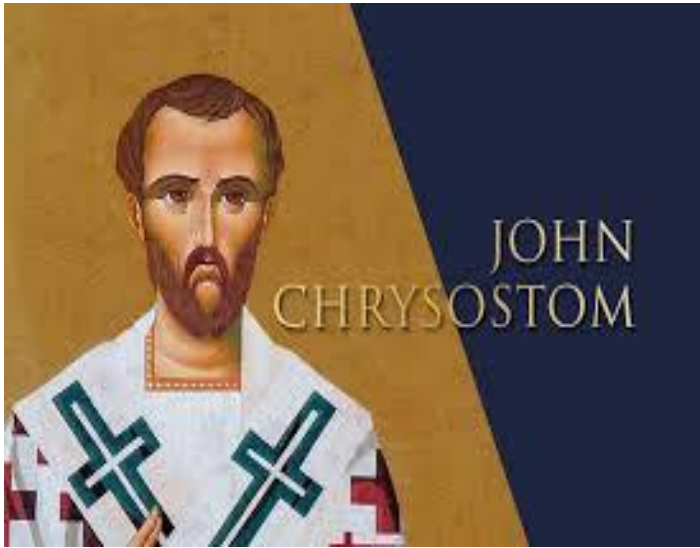
We know from all historical sources that early Christians sang during worship. Nearly all of the backgrounds from which early Christians came-Jewish, Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and more-had instrumental traditions, but these traditions carried negative associations. In pagan worship, instrumental music and debauchery were often linked, so the Christians did not use instrumental music in worship. Unaccompanied vocal music continued to be the norm in Christian worship for centuries.

By the 15th century, organ music had been widely accepted in the Roman Catholic West, though it never caught on the Orthodox East. The Reformation kicked off large-scale worship wars. When the major western groups picked their positions, they looked broadly like this: Catholics retained instrumental and organ music performed only by musicians (the congregation was not invited to sing along, and members couldn't have followed the complex music anyway), but other recognized the problems with the use of instruments. For example:



Justin Martyr, who was martyred in 165 AD stated: “Simply singing is not agreeable to children, but singing with lifeless instruments and with dancing and clapping: on which account the use of this kind of instruments and of others agreeable to children is removed from the songs in the churches and what is left remaining simply singing.”

John Chrysostom in AD 347 wrote: “It was permitted to the Jews as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were drawn off from idols; but now, instead of organs, we may use own bodies to praise him withal.”



347 AD



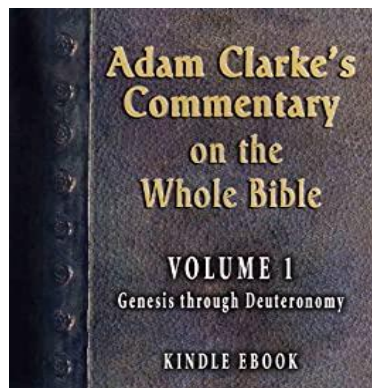
1200's AD

Thomas Aquinas, noted Roman Catholic scholar wrote: “Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psaltries, to praise God withal, that she might not seem to Judaize.”

John Calvin wrote: **Musical instruments in the celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of other shadows of the law.** The papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise, but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to Him..... What therefore, was in use under the law is by no means entitled to our practice under the gospel; and these things being not only superfluous, but useless, are to be abstained from because **pure and simple modulation is sufficient for the praises of God, if it is sung with the heart and with the mouth.....** **Instrumental music, we therefore maintain, was only tolerated on account of the times and the people,** because they were as boys, as the sacred scripture speaketh, whose conditions required these puerile rudiments. But in gospel times we must not recourse to them unless we wish to destroy the evangelical perfection and to obscure the meridian light which we enjoy in Christ our Lord. “

1500's AD

Adam Clark, Methodist commentator wrote: “But were it evident, which it is not, either from this or any other place in the scared writings, that instruments of music were prescribed by divine authority under the law, could this be adduced with any semblance of reason, that they ought to be used in Christian worship? No, the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion is against this; and those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and that which they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite spirit who requires his followers to worship Him in spirit and in truth, for to no such worship are those instruments friendly.”



1800 AD

Calvinists originally opted for unaccompanied congregational psalm-singing, and Lutherans adopted a mix of instrumental and vocal music, some of which was performed by musicians and some of which was sung by the congregation.

A few western churches, such as the Churches of Christ, still do not use instruments in worship. These churches tend to employ the basic arguments: because there's nothing in the New Testament about instruments, and because the early church certainly didn't use instruments, we shouldn't either.

We must follow the example set for us by those early Christians who heard and followed the teachings given from the apostles who received the from the Holy Spirit. We must worship God in His own appointed way if we are to be accepted as His followers. Jesus said in :

Luke 6:46“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”