

## Searching His Word

Where does the Bible say that? Part 3

Mechanical Instruments of Music

By Russell Earl

As we continue to answer the question: “Where does the Bible say that?” We come to the next topic of study: Mechanical Instruments of Music. “*speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” Eph 5:19 (NKJV). In this verse the New Testament tells how we are to give praise to God and by omission how we are not to praise Him.

Some use the argument that David used mechanical instruments in the Old Testament thus it is acceptable for us to do so today. It is also true that in the Old Testament sacrifices were offered up to God, lighting incense, multiple wives and concubines were also tolerated. We can see that it is not consistent to accept mechanical instruments of music in our worship services but reject other aspects of the old law. The Bible tells us that we are no longer under the old law (Law of Moses) but are under the new law (The Law of Christ, Col 2:11-14). We do not follow the Old Testament law today so why would one use an Old Testament example to prove what they do in worship today?

The question surrounding the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is a matter of authority. Has God given us the authority in the New Testament to use mechanical instruments of music in worship to Him? Since we know we are under the New Testament law (Rom. 7:4; Gal. 3:24-25; Col. 2:14) we turn to the New Testament to find authority for everything we do. There is an instrument that must be used to worship God and we find it in Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19. The instrument we use is the heart. We are to praise God from our hearts through our lips. In the Old Testament when instruments are used they are mentioned by name and the same is done in the New Testament. The instrument is the heart and not a mechanical instrument.

Other justifications we often hear for using mechanical instruments of music are; 1) “I like it in my worship”, 2) “I don’t see anything wrong with it” or 3) “this is how we’ve always done it”.

Let’s consider the first two arguments together. Notice how the worship of God is described in these first two arguments. God is not mentioned in either argument! Who is the worship service centering around in these arguments? The person and not God. On whom should the worship service be focused on? *God*. Who are the arguments for mechanical instruments of music focused on? *Self*. Is it not true our worship is focused on God and not on ourselves? If this is the case why use such selfish arguments for something that is not supported in New Testament scripture.

The final argument “this is how we’ve always done it” is a false statement. The use of mechanical instruments of music in worship was added long after the establishment of the church in Acts 2. Notice some statements by popular men of denominations who today use mechanical instruments of music.

John Calvin one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church made this statement: “*Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than*

*the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law.”*

Adam Clarke a well known Methodist commentator says this: *“Music as a science, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity.”*

John Wesley a founder of the Methodist church says *“I have no objection to instruments of music, in our chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard.”*

Martin Luther a reformer called the instrument an “ensign of Baal” which means a tool of evil or of the devil. Also note that Charles Spurgeon a popular Baptist preacher who preached in London, England for 20 years in front of thousands of people did not have mechanical instruments of music in worship. We can clearly see the mechanical instrument has not always been around but was added by man to please man.

Where there is no authority we cannot do things that would go against God and His Word. Let us always remember worship and praise in our services are about God and not about us. Let us put God 1<sup>st</sup> and worship and praise Him as He has authorized and to do so with our whole heart.