

## ***The Sound of Music***

### **I. God's Intention for Praise and Worship**

As individuals, it is important for us to praise and worship God in our daily life. Praise and worship is not reserved solely for church services. God inhabits the praises of His people, but He intends that through our lives praise and worship is demonstrated to those in the world around us.

#### **Psalm 150:1**

*Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.*

Praise and worship begins in the sanctuary, but then it is taken out to all of creation as a means of witnessing to the saving and delivering power of the Lord Jesus Christ to those around us. God desires that we praise and worship Him. He has ordained that we, as believers, not only praise Him from our lips, but also through instruments. God's intention is for praise and worship to spring forth from hearts and lips of His people and be accompanied by the sounds of musical instruments.

#### **Psalm 150:2-6**

*Praise him for his mighty acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness.*

*Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.*

*Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.*

*Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.*

*Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

God wants musical instruments to be used in praise and worship to Him. Some denominations will not use musical instruments in the church because they believe instruments were only for Old Testament times. But

this thinking is wrong. Praise and worship was not only established for the Old Testament saints; it was also intended for New Testament believers and, ultimately, for our future in heaven.

Although musical instruments are mentioned in the New Testament, there is very little mention of praise and worship. God intended for us to take praise and worship of the Old Testament and apply the same principles in the New Testament. However, what distinguishes praise and worship of Old Testament believers from New Testament believers is the dimension of the Spirit-filled life for New Testament saints. This is the reason we are to praise Him in *psalms*, *hymns*, and *spiritual songs*. By the addition of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we have the ability to sing with tongues and have new songs given to us by the Holy Spirit. We have a whole new dimension of praise and worship that was unavailable in the days of David, Solomon, and Moses.

You don't have to be "called" to be a psalmist. A believer in Jesus Christ can have the Holy Spirit flow through them to sing a new song unto the Lord. There are teachers in the body of Christ, but we are all called in one degree or another to be teachers of the Lord. There are preachers who stand behind pulpits, but you are all called to preach the gospel to the unbeliever whether you ever stand behind a pulpit or not. There are divine calls of healing ministries, yet every believer has been called to lay hands on the sick and see them recover. I believe that God has laid His hands on individuals to be psalmists in the body of Christ; however every one of us can still praise and worship the Lord through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Those songs may never be published or used for congregations. God may give you songs personally in the midst of tragedy to help bring you out of it. By entering the presence of the Holy Spirit, you may receive songs for the moment that will bring you deliverance.

## **II. Types of Instruments**

### **Psalm 150:3**

*Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.*

The *psaltery* is a harp and the *harp* is a lyre.

## Psalm 150:4

*Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.*

Timbrel and dance always go together. This combination is used in a number of passages of Scripture and in other psalms. It was used in the dedication of the temple and in the rebuilding of the second temple. *Timbrel* represents the percussion instruments; musical instruments that bring a beat. You know when you hear a beat, your feet start to move. That is why the psalmist included the timbrel and dance together because God intended that rhythm be used to accompany praise and worship. These beats automatically inspires feet dancing, and that is what God enjoys seeing among the congregation. The word *organs* is the word for flutes.

## Psalm 150:5-6

*Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.*

*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

It is okay to praise God with loud instruments. It won't hurt His ears. He is to be praised with all kinds of instruments. The wind, stringed, and percussion instruments are the main types mentioned in the Old Testament.

There were a number of wind instruments mentioned in the Old Testament that are still used today. Although technology has advanced many of them, the basics of instruments have not changed. There were trumpets made from silver. Shofars are rams' horns. The pipes include flutes and bagpipes. Stringed instruments are the psaltery, lyre, and harp. Tambourines, drums, cymbals, and bells are percussion instruments. Each is different from one another and all are found in this passage of Scripture.

This scripture is not trying to uniquely identify each instrument, because some types of instruments mentioned in the Old Testament do not exist today. This scripture is saying *any kind of instrument can be used to praise the Lord!* No instrument is taboo in the church or in the body of

Christ. This has often been debated among believers throughout the years. Is there any kind of instrument that is of the devil? No! All types of instruments can be used in church to worship the Lord.

Jubal was the first musician mentioned in the Bible. (Genesis 4:21) He played the harp and the flute — a stringed instrument and a wind instrument. Jubal was the first to create instruments, and from him came all those who became musicians. The term *jubilee* comes from his name. His name was used for the celebration for the Year of Jubilee, which was introduced and celebrated by the sounding of many musical instruments. The Year of Jubilee was always introduced by the blowing of the trumpet to introduce the Day of Atonement.

We're not sure whether he was a believer or not, but Jubal was a Gentile because Israel as a nation, wasn't born until Abraham came along. Abraham lived hundreds of years after the flood and after the Tower of Babel. When God spread the inhabitants of the earth around the world and confounded their languages at the Tower of Babel, the last nation He formed supernaturally came from one man—Abraham. From Abraham came the nation of Israel. Therefore, all musical instruments were created before the nation of Israel existed; they came from the world. Instruments were already being used by the world before the Jews ever used them.

The names of many instruments are found in the Book of Psalms and these psalms were written to be played on these specific instruments.

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| <b>Neginoth:</b>   | This was a stringed instrument found in Psalm 4, Psalm 6, Psalm 54, Psalm 67, and Psalm 76.      |
| <b>Nehiloth:</b>   | This was a wind instrument mentioned in Psalm 5.   |
| <b>Sheminith:</b>  | This was an eight-stringed lyre, similar to our guitars of today, found in Psalm 6 and Psalm 12. |
| <b>Gittith:</b>    | This was a harp and it accompanied Psalm 8, Psalm 81, and Psalm 84.                              |
| <b>Shoshannim:</b> | This was a long, tubular, straight trumpet made of silver found in Psalm 45 and Psalm            |

69. It was most likely used for very majestic songs.

**Shoshannim-Eduth:** This was the assembly trumpet, also called the shofar, mentioned in Psalm 80.

In addition to these specific instruments that David intended certain psalms to be accompanied by, the Psalms also mentions percussion instruments — the tambourines, drums, and cymbals.

### **III. Origin of Instruments**

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The harp and other stringed instruments came from Egypt. When the Bible refers to Egypt, it says, “Don’t return. Don’t go back there. Don’t look to them for help.” Many of the musical instruments Israel used were brought with them out of captivity. The children of Israel brought them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, across the desert, into the Promised Land, and they found their way into Jewish society all the way down to the days of David. David was using instruments that originally came from Egypt and had probably been adapted to some extent.

Abraham was from Ur of Chaldees, the same place from which the harp originated.

The wind instruments and percussion instruments came from Babylon. Babylon is where the children of Israel were persecuted, taken into captivity, and held for seventy years before they were allowed to go free and return to their nation to rebuild the temple. It’s interesting that when the children of Israel returned from that time of captivity, they brought their instruments with them.

The Greeks introduced wind instruments, specifically the flute.

Today, our instruments also come from the world. I remember growing up in a Pentecostal church where drums were not allowed in church. They were forbidden. One preacher came to our church and taught that rock ‘n roll was the devil’s diversion. It was something that would hurt us, especially the beats. He said the syncopated beats could actually change the heartbeat and bring on heart attacks. We were afraid of these things, so at the end of the service, we all went down and broke our records in

front of everyone. The next day, we couldn't believe what we had done and went out and bought them all again!

God created beats. Any instrument that creates a beat can be used to praise the Lord. God likes rhythm, whether it is slow or fast. He says we are to praise Him with the timbrel. Notice that the timbrel was mentioned with dance. Often people say that music sets your feet dancing and you just don't know what is going to happen when you start dancing. The good news is we can praise God with the dance!

Others have said that synthesizers should not be used in church because they were coming from the world. Thank God for keyboards in the church. I have been to small churches with only a couple of people leading praise and worship with a keyboard. As a result, the use of the keyboard could make a sound like a nice-sized orchestra. Thank God for the addition of these instruments into the body of Christ.

There was a time when believers debated about which type of guitar should or should not be allowed in the church. Some said only acoustic guitars should be allowed while others, considered rebellious by some, believed it was acceptable to use an electric guitar in church.

Some people are offended by the use of brass instruments in the church because the world uses them to produce jazz music. But why should that be an issue? Thank God the days of one piano on the platform and someone saying, "Pray for me that I can just play this," are over! Thank God we have accomplished musicians who know how to play, have a heart after God, and can play without us having to pray for them to just get through the song!

## **IV. Instruments in the Church**

### **1 Corinthians 13:1**

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [agape love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

This verse is referring to musical instruments.

Both First and Second Corinthians were written to a church. Therefore, when Paul talks to a church about a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal,

he probably turned to the orchestra in the church and pointed out the musical instruments. Paul is saying if a believer doesn't have the love of God in his or her heart, all they are is like a musical instrument making a lot of noise with no quality.

The issue is not how well an individual plays an instrument; the issue is the love behind it. An instrument should be played with precision, but above the expertise, God's love should come through because that is what causes the anointing to flow. The quality of your talent does not cause the anointing flow; it is the quality of your heart behind your ability that causes the power of God to move.

First Corinthians 14:7-8 mentions three instruments — the flute, the harp, and the trumpet. Again, this is a passage of Scripture written to a local church. Where do you think Paul got these ideas? Not from the world. He must have been present in the church at Corinth. The church at Corinth came out of the world and brought these things with them. The trouble is they often brought their sin into the church also. Paul was telling them to get the sin out of the church, and to have a love for God.

## **V. Instruments in Heaven**

In Luke 15, when the prodigal son came home, the older brother heard dancing and music in the home. The home of the prodigal represents heaven when we come back to the Lord here in this earth. This passage is not strictly referring to sinners, but also to believers. When we return to fellowship as the prodigal did, there are instruments being played and dancing and rejoicing in heaven!

The New Testament also mentions musical instruments in heaven. In Revelation 5:8, the elders have harps. The twenty-four elders seated around the throne of God represent believers who have reached positions because of their excellence of works and ministry in this earth. They are ruling and reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ, and they have harps. Also, the saints in heaven are declared to have harps. (Revelation 14:2-4 and Revelation 15:2) For those of you who didn't learn how to play an instrument on this earth, you'll get a chance in heaven. Harps will be used to praise and worship the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father!

## **VI. Out of the World and Into the Church**

God is the ultimate Creator and He has put that creativity into mankind. This creativity is what has given man the ability to create musical instruments. The church can't sit off to the side and say, "We don't want those instruments because the world created them." Certain types of musical instruments may have been considered taboo for the church, but God is declaring we can sanctify them.

Think about it for a moment. A simple prayer brought you out of the world and into the Church. If God can save your soul from hell, take you out of darkness and into the light, and take you out of Satan's kingdom and bring you into the kingdom of God, why can't He sanctify a guitar or a set of drums?

Maybe you own musical instruments and laid them aside because the last time you played them, you were a sinner and have since become a Christian. I encourage you to pick up that instrument again, lay hands on it, anoint it with oil, and use it in church to bring glory to God!

Many hymns sung in the church through the years originated as secular music. One example is the melody for "A Mighty Fortress," which came from the bars of those days. Christians took the original melody and replaced secular words with words of worship to God. In the past, it was not uncommon for Christian writers to take melodies created by the world and add words through which God's people could magnify and glorify God.

There is another old song entitled "He's Coming Soon." It was a Hawaiian melody that someone added Christian lyrics to, making it a powerful song. There is nothing wrong with taking a melody from the world, sanctifying it, adding godly lyrics, and bringing it into the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose of magnifying His name.

What about jazz, rock 'n roll, classical, reggae and the many other forms of music common in our day and age? No music, in and of itself, is evil. It is the lyrics and heart behind the music that are evil.

## **VII. Ultimate Praise and Worship**

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### **Psalm 150:6**

*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

This verse expresses God's intention concerning music. Musical instruments are fine, but musical instruments have no life; people have life. If you lay a musical instrument down and command it to worship God, it cannot. Trumpets must be blown, percussion instruments must be beaten, and stringed instruments must be strummed. Even electronic instruments must be turned on by a switch. No instrument has any life of its own. Every instrument ever created by man is dependent upon a person who will use it. As great as musical instruments are, they can never take the place of people.

What really pleases God is when the breath that He put into man is used to return praise and worship back to Him. Genesis 2:7 tells us God breathed into man, into his nostrils, the breath of life and man became a living creation, a living soul. God wants us to return our breath back to Him.

Men have a will; instruments do not. God wants us to take our will and use it to praise Him.

### **Psalm 107:1-2**

*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

*Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.*

The redeemed are those who He has delivered from the hand of the enemy. If you have been redeemed from the hand of the enemy, this verse says you are to praise the Lord. It is our responsibility to tell those around us we are redeemed. As believers, we are to sing of our redemption. As believers, we are to praise the Lord, Who has redeemed us.

We will have instruments in heaven, but God is not looking for instruments to worship Him. Angels worship Him, but God still desires His

children, the redeemed, to worship Him. Angels have not been redeemed. They are not of those of which the Bible says, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." They praise Him for all the good things He has done, but they have not fallen away from God and then been redeemed like man. When angels fell from God, they could never be redeemed; but when man fell from God, Jesus gave His very life to redeem us back to God so we can shout to the Lord, "I am the redeemed of the Lord!"

Don't reserve your praise and worship for Sunday services. Let your daily life be filled with praise and worship unto God because you are redeemed!