

One of the things that people readily notice about our assemblies is that we do not use instruments in our worship services. This may be seen as an unusual deviation from the practice of virtually all American churches which commonly use instruments in worship. In this brief article we hope to set forth the reasons for our practice.

It is a matter of faith to us! (2 Cor. 4:13).

We take seriously the admonition of Peter to speak only “the utterances of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).¹

It is a matter of faith based on our understanding of God.

We believe that God has at all times revealed to man how He wants to be worshipped. For example, in the OT we see 15 chapters of the book of Exodus explicitly devoted to God’s arrangements for the proper worship of Him and this warning was given by God to Moses: “According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it. (Exodus 25:9)²

In addition, we see evidence that God was displeased with those who presumed to change His requirements: *Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire*

in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. (Leviticus 10:1-2)

And so it becomes important to know what God has said about worship and to follow it carefully.

It is a matter of faith based on our understanding of how God communicates His will to us.

We believe that God speaks today through Jesus Christ: *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son... (Hebrews 1:1-2)*

All that we know about His teaching comes to us through His apostles who have preserved His teaching. They were promised help in remembering what He said: “*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (John 14:26)*

They were promised guidance into all truth: “*But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and*

He will disclose to you what is to come. (John 16:13)

The apostles have written Jesus’ teaching for future generations to read and understand.³

It is a matter of faith based on what the NT actually says about worship.

Jesus taught that worship would be in spirit and truth: “*God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*” (John 4:24)

What may not be immediately apparent is that Jesus was indicating a change in worship from the OT system of worship. The OT worship was located to physical location and consisted of symbolic ritual. The NT worship would be “in spirit” (within the heart of each worshipper) and “in truth” (in the reality to which the OT symbols pointed).⁴

The apostles taught Christians to worship God by singing. This is seen both in statements or commands and also in examples of their practice both individually and corporately.

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; (Acts 16:25)

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. (James 5:13)

“Therefore I will give praise to Thee among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Thy name.” (Romans 15:9)⁵

“I will proclaim Thy name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise.” (Hebrews 2:12)⁶

What is the outcome then? ...I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also. (1 Corinthians 14:15)

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 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 5:18-20)⁷

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)

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

*(Hebrews 13:15)*⁸

And so we see clear evidence of singing as the way the apostles taught Christians to worship God.

To our readers we ask: How can we do what God has not commanded and know that He is pleased with it? How shall we avoid presumptuous sin? As for us, we have chosen the path of faith. In this way we can be sure that our worship is pleasing to the Lord. We hope you will also give this serious thought.

¹ All that we “speak” in our teaching must coincide with what God has spoken.

² This warning is especially important in that the tabernacle service was a copy or shadow of the “true” one to come (See Heb. 9:23-24, 10:1). If God was concerned about the service of the copy, would He be unconcerned about the service of the true one?

³ We affirm that the NT Scriptures teach us God’s will by revealing the purpose statements and commands that Jesus and His apostles gave and by showing us how the NT church understood these commands and obeyed them.

⁴ The word “truth” here in context is used similarly to the Hebrew writer’s use of the word “true” to describe the tabernacle in

which Jesus now serves as high priest (Heb. 8:2). It is the real worship to which the OT worship pointed as a shadow.

⁵ By analogy Jewish Christians are depicted as worshipping among Gentiles just as David anticipated his worship among them (2 Sam. 22:50).

⁶ The Hebrew writer remembers the words of the Messiah as he anticipates in prophecy His resurrection from the dead. Jesus is portrayed as singing among the NT saints.

⁷ The Greek word “psallo” may be used in the more ancient sense of “plucking” or “making melody”, with the heart being the instrument. However it seems more likely that “psallo” might better be translated “praising” as was its meaning in Koine Greek.

⁸ This verse is especially significant since it describes the spiritual sacrifices of the NT tabernacle and its priests. Though priests worshipped with instruments in the OT system, they are shown here to praise God with their lips.

This tract was written by Johnny Felker.

If you would like to study this subject or other Biblical topics further please let us know how we can help you.



We would be honored to have you visit with us at Perry Heights at any of our services.

**Sun. 9:00 a.m. (Bible class)
9:55 a.m. (Worship service)
6:00 p.m. (Worship service)
Wed. 7:00 p.m. (Bible class)**

**Perry Heights Church of Christ
423 Donelson Pike
Nashville, TN 37214
(615) 883-3118**

**Questions
Our
Neighbors
Ask**

***“Why Do You Not Use
Instruments In Your
Worship Services?”***