



instruments (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13). A sample of a first century Christian worship assembly identifies singing as the type of worshipful music that had apostolic sanction or authority (1 Corinthians 14:15).

“Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” in the early church were **spoken through singing**, and *the instrument used to make melody* was the **“heart”** (Ephesians 5:19). In addition to wording praise to God, the singing of these hymns was intended to teach spiritual truths (Colossians 3:16). Mechanical instruments [and the clapping of hands] were incapable of doing this. Irrespective of the place or occasion, first century worshipful music involved only the *singing* of “psalms” (James 5:13; Hebrews 2:12).

The first century church did not use instrumental music in worship because there was no biblical authorization for it. For hundreds of years after the establishment of the Lord’s church, no congregation added mechanical music to its worship. Even famous religious leaders throughout history realized that instrumental music in worship is **not authorized** by the New Testament. There was a time when neither the

Catholic Church nor denominational churches used instruments in worship.

“Luther called the organ an ensign of Baal; Calvin said that instrumental music was not more fitter to be adopted into the Christian Church than the incense and the candlestick; Knox called the organ a kist [chest] of whistles. The Church of England revived them, against a very strong protest, and the English dissenters would not touch them.” (**Music, Instrumental**, *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*.)

No one has ever been authorized to add instrumental music to Christian worship! Everyone who respects biblical authority and wants to please God will render to the Almighty the worshipful music He has authorized – singing. Not using instrumental music in worship is a legitimate matter of faith, rather than a mere preference. **The churches of Christ are obligated to practice what Jesus Christ has authorized, and He has not authorized instrumental music in Christian worship.**

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What About Instrumental Music in Christian Worship?

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The church belongs to Christ (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16) and is obligated to conduct itself according to what Jesus authorized (Colossians 3:16-17). People living in the Gospel Age must heed the words of Jesus Christ rather than the words of Moses or the words of Old Testament prophets. God the Father emphasized this at the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ when He uttered, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”* (Matthew 17:1-5 NKJV).

Remember that Moses (the lawgiver of the Old Testament) and Elijah (representing all the Old Testament prophets) were present at the Transfiguration. Hence, the Father essentially said, “Listen to my Son, Jesus Christ, rather than to Moses or to the prophets.” Jesus Himself stressed His supremacy during His earthly ministry when He said, *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48).

Further, Jesus Christ is the Lawgiver (James 4:12) and Mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15). Little surprise, then, that He condemned alteration of divine revelation (Judaism *then*, Christianity *now*) with *“the commandments of men”* (Matthew 15:9), and that the apostle Paul also condemned

false Gospels (Galatians 1:6-9) and following human will instead of God’s will (Colossians 2:23). One must turn **exclusively** to the New Testament to learn what God has authorized, including the topic of worshipful music under Christianity.

The Old Testament and heaven are incorrect places to look for what God has authorized for worshipful music today.

The Old Testament has been replaced with the New Testament for people now living. It has been *“done away”* (2 Corinthians 3:6-11), *“abolished”* (Ephesians 2:15) and taken out of the way by nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:14). People living today have been *“delivered”* from all of the Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments (Romans 7:6-7). Further, the New Testament is a *“better covenant”* (Hebrews 8:6,7). **Therefore, the Old Testament is an incorrect place to look for what God has authorized in worship today (including worshipful music).**

What may or may not occur in heaven is irrelevant regarding the Christian Age, and often passages about heaven are misrepresented in a vain attempt to justify what God has not authorized for Christian worship. Every soul will be judged at Final Judgment respecting the law of God un-

der which he or she lived (Revelation 20:12-15). Therefore, supposed references to instruments of music in heaven are meaningless regarding what **is authorized** in worship of God **today**.

First, Revelation 14:2 really discusses “voice” compared to “harps.” Second, the Book of Revelation is highly figurative and comprised largely of symbols, so that the mention of “harps” in heaven does not literally refer to instruments of music (Revelation 5:8; 15:2). **What may or may not occur in eternity is irrelevant regarding Christian worship today.**

Singing is the only type of music that God has authorized for use in worship today.

Early in human history, Jubal invented *“the harp and flute”* (Genesis 4:21). King David introduced instruments of music into Jewish worship (1 Chronicles 23:5; 2 Chronicles 7:6; 29:26; Amos 6:5).

Obviously, these mechanical instruments still existed in the first century when the church was begun by Christ, and they could have been authorized by our Lord for Christian worship. However, He made no such authorization!

All worshipful music associated with the Lord’s church in the New Testament is **singing without accompaniment by mechanical**

