

Musical Instruments of God

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of worship through living instruments, guided by the Holy Spirit, to glorify God.

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 16:42, Nehemiah 12:36, Psalm 33:2, Luke 24:53, Acts 2:1, Romans 15:6, Ephesians 4:4, Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Worship Music", "Spiritual Praise"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the significance of music in worship, drawing parallels between the Old Testament instruments of praise made by King David and the living instruments of praise in the New Testament, emphasizing that true worship is directed towards God and not for the entertainment of men. He highlights the importance of offering spiritual praise acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, as redeemed individuals are now alive to God and filled with the Holy Spirit for this Godward 'ministry.' Vine also discusses the unity and harmony in worship, both in the Old and New Testaments, pointing to the rich melodies of redemption in the heart and the surpassing excellence of assembly worship in Christ.

Transcript

1 Chronicles 16:42

In order that Israel, God's chosen people for earth, might give expression to their thanksgivings, praise and worship to God, minerals were quarried from the hills, wood was gotten from the forests, and strings from animals slain. These were made into cymbals, comets, trumpets, psalteries, and harps, as ordered by King David, for the Levitical singers and the 120 priestly trumpeters to join "as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord." They were called the "musical instruments of God" (1 Chr. 16:42; 2 Chr. 5:12-13); "the instruments of music of the Lord which David the King had made to praise the Lord, because His mercy endureth for ever, when David praised by their ministry" (7:6), and they were also designated later in revival times, "the musical instruments of David the man of God" (Neh. 12:36). Thus equipped, Israel--divinely called "the Lord's people"--found a suitable mode of expressing their national and earthly praise to the Lord; but this cannot be too earnestly emphasized--the music of praise was TO GOD, and not for the mere entertainment OF MEN!

In the assembly of God today the music of praise by the Spirit is also GODWARD; but the instruments mentioned in the epistles which have been given for the guidance of the assembly are of better materials, for they must be in keeping with a better "ministry," based upon the death, resurrection and ascension of

Christ, the glorified Head of the assembly, and formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Unlike the lifeless instruments connected with the old order, a new creation in Christ has provided living instruments with the vital melodies of redemption uprising in the heart. It is true they have been quarried from the hills of a world of sin, gotten from the forests of darkness and unbelief, and brought out of death into life. Being born again, and having proved the Lord's goodness and pardoning grace, they are fitted to offer up spiritual praise acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Once dead in offences and sins, they are now alive to God, being made nigh to Him in Christ through His atoning blood, so that they are both the priests of God and the instruments of God through the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are able to respond to the word--"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifices of PRAISE TO GOD!" They are living instruments themselves, and they have the living power of the Holy Spirit to fit them for this Godward "ministry."

These living instruments are the only instruments of music mentioned as being in the assembly which is in Christ, in the New Testament; but, oh, how surpassing all that went before are the grace, the melody, the spiritual songs and the theme provided! Romans 15:6 speaks of our glorifying God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "with one accord" and "with one mouth." One hundred and twenty priests sounded their trumpets as one, we are told in 2 Chronicles 5:12, and in chapter 9 we read of Sheba's queen giving the king "an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon"; but in Acts 1:15 we have the chosen materials for the new and richer music, for the more surpassing excellence of assembly offering to the Lord when "the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty" also.

We are given both striking contrasts and beautiful similarities in the Old and New Testaments. When the law of holy demand was given three thousand were slain! When the Spirit was given at Pentecost for the preaching of free grace three thousand were saved! In the typical system of the old covenant, when the music of praise TO GOD at the place of Jehovah's name was introduced, one hundred and twenty priests sounded their trumpets, as we have said; "and the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord"; so when the inauguration of the new worship was to take place, after Christ had ascended to heaven, when, as we have seen, the hundred and twenty were together, we read, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication . . . And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). Then, with a sound from heaven, the Spirit came upon them and filled them. In regard to the assembly of which Christ is the ascended Head today, we read, "There is one body, and one Spirit" (Eph. 4:4); and, being "filled with the Spirit," the new musical instruments of God are fitted for making melody in the heart TO THE LORD (5:18-19); also for singing with grace in the heart TO THE LORD (Col. 3:16) Moreover, if the talents of gold were received by Solomon from the Queen of Sheba, along with precious stones and spices of unequalled excellence, how much more precious must the gift of the Father to His Son have been; when, having been rejected on earth and glorified in heaven, He received the hundred and twenty as the Father's love gift; and, accepted in divine righteousness, having Him as their preciousness, the sweet fragrance of worship flowed forth, as "WITH GREAT JOY" they were found together with one accord, "PRAISING AND BLESSING GOD" (Luke 24:53).

Such harmonious worship rising to God Himself is a suitable ending to the choice Gospel of Luke, which has in its beginning song after song expressing the soul's rejoicing and glory in the Lord. Many of the Psalms too show how the hearts of the godly turned their praise to Him, singing, "Blessed be the Lord!" "O give thanks unto the Lord!" "BLESSED BE GOD!" "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting!" "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart in the assembly of the upright!" and, toward the

close there burst forth HALLELUJAHS, richly responding to the dealings of Jehovah, in which the soul has learned something of His mercy, justice, loving-kindness, righteousness, long-suffering, equity, glory and greatness, tuning the "musical instruments of God" to such lofty anthems of praise that the final words ring out, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! HALLELUJAH!" Yes, and He is ten thousand times more worthy of such high praise than our highest apprehension of His worthiness appreciates! Yet what we have learned of Him makes our praise flow to Him!

"Worthy of homage and of praise,

Worthy by all to be adored,

Exhaustless Theme of heavenly lays!

Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord."

When the saints gather together in the assembly today, and the Holy Spirit brings the wonderful love and loveliness of God's beloved Son before the hearts of the redeemed, the richness of responsive music in the heart to God may vary greatly, and that according to the measure of our experimental knowledge of Christ; but in every case, whether smaller or greater, the glad strains sound sweetly in God our Father's ears. When Paul wrote concerning assembly order in 1 Corinthians 14:15, he said, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

In three Psalms in the inspired Song Book of God's earthly people, we are told of "an instrument of ten strings" used for His praise (Ps. 33:2; 92:3; 144:9). In the first of these His "word" is the main theme; in the second His "work"; and in the third the Lord Himself; ending, "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." It is clear that man, according to the designs of God's love, is to be for His own pleasure, all his powers being used for His praise. This can only be through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 14:15 two strings are spoken of as sounding their notes of praise in the assembly--the spirit and the understanding! The law demanded love from man's heart, mind, soul, and strength! The finished work and the present grace of God's Son alone could bring to pass response from these four strings, which the law failed to do. Now as blessed in Christ Jesus, our voice too is to sound forth His praise; also our mouth and our lips are to praise the One who is so worthy. When He was on the earth Jesus loosed "the string" of the tongue of one man. How could the strings resound with the music of praise unless His work of divine grace freed them and tuned them to do so? All will be gloriously freed and harmoniously tuned soon, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again! All ten strings, yea, all the being of the redeemed--will be fully fashioned for the praise and glory of God then. For this we were predestinated and called of God.

"Then, Saviour! Thou shalt have full praise,

We soon shall meet Thee on the cloud,

We soon shall see Thee face to face,

In glory praising as we would."

Man's Creator and Redeemer only could both design and bring to pass the scenes of universal rejoicing and splendour, with Jesus as the visible Head and Centre of all, with every part attuned by Him, where the will of God is the delight of every soul, and where all resounds with holy melody and worship in response

to the leading of the Son of God. He is truly "the Chief Musician" as well as the Song Leader in the assembly (Heb. 2:12). "I will sing!" He said. If those who run in the way of faith are exhorted to look off unto Jesus, surely the singers in redemption's choir likewise need to be told to heed the note raised by the Song Leader! and those who share in the music of God's praise to mark well the rhythm and harmony of the Chief Musician. The power of the Spirit is given to enable us so to do, but though our "efforts now to praise are often weak and lowly, a nobler, sweeter song we'll raise with all the saints in glory!" There will not be a note out of tune then! There will be no discord! The musical instruments of God--the redeemed singers on high--shall sound forth His worthy praise in heavenly perfection. Faith anticipates the joyful strains.

Hark, the Chief Musician sings

Sweetest song of sacred fame!

Here He died, above He lives.

Praise sublime to God He brings!

Touches He ten ready strings!

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