

# Instrumental Music In Worship

*by David Padfield*

It would be impossible to preach a sermon on "*The Use Of Instrumental Music In The New Testament Church*." There is not one word in all the New Testament about Christians using mechanical instruments in worship to God.

Instrumental music was introduced into religious service by King David, nearly 450 years after the Israelites left Egypt ([1 Chron. 16](#)). The use of instrumental music in worship is mentioned about 36 times in the Old Testament, but not one single time in the New.

Some attempt to justify the use of instruments by saying, "David used it in the Old Testament." While this is true, we are under the authority of King Jesus not King David! The New Covenant demands not only a change of the priesthood, but also a change of the law ([Heb. 7:12](#)). The First Covenant has been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross ([Col. 2:14](#)).

Nine out of nine times when we find what the early Christians did as far as music was concerned, the Bible says they sang. Thus, we do have a Bible pattern for singing.

- "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" ([Matt. 26:30](#))
- "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God" ([Acts 16:25](#))
- "I will confess thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" ([Rom. 15:9](#))
- "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" ([1 Cor. 14:15](#))
- "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" ([Eph. 5:19](#))
- "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts..." ([Col. 3:16](#))
- "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" ([Heb. 2:12](#))
- "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" ([Heb. 13:15](#))
- "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" ([James 5:13](#))

Not only do we have the Bible record of how the early church worshipped God in song, but secular history gives us additional information.

"Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some churches of western Europe, about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of the Franks, in 775." (*The American Cyclopaedia*, Vol. 12).

"The organ is said to have been first employed in the church during the time of Pope Vitalian I." [c. 666 a.d.] (*New International Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13, p. 446).

Even men who were responsible for the establishment of modern denominations urged their followers to reject the use of mechanical instruments in service to God.

**John Calvin** is invariably named with **Martin Luther** as the chief builders of Protestant Denominationalism. Calvin, architect of the Presbyterian church, said, "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. The papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to Him." (*Calvin's Commentary on the 33rd Psalm*). Martin Luther made the simple statement that "The organ in the worship is the ensign of Baal."

**John Wesley**, founder of the Methodist church, said, "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels provided they are neither heard nor seen." (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 686).

**Adam Clarke** was born in Ireland about 1762. His commentaries on the Bible have been one of the best selling reference books for over a century. While discussing the use of mechanical instruments in worship, he said, "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. 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 I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity." (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 4).

The ways of God and man are not the same (Isa. 55:8-9). Those who "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11) will be content to sing as God has directed.