

VIGIL



“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

~ I Peter 5:8

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Worship II

Is There Any Harm in Instrumental Music? **(Continued from March/April 2005)**

Hugo McCord

II. A Certain Greek Word

But some says, “A certain Greek word, psallo, demands instrumental accompaniment to the singing.” Alas! Does one have to know Greek in order to worship God acceptably?

Furthermore, if “a certain Greek word, psallo, demands instrumental accompaniment to the singing,” one wonders why the Greek Catholic Church (100 million members) does not use instrumental music in its worship services. One of their members (a graduate student at Harvard University, talking to Everette Ferguson) gave two reasons why “we do not use instrumental music”: “it is not in the New Testament and it is contrary to the nature of Christian worship.”

Thus one who knows the Greek language says that there “is not in the New Testament” a certain word that demands instrumental accompaniment to singing. Furthermore, if there were a word in the Greek New Testament that demands instrumental accompaniment in singing one wonders why all the popular English translations have omitted it. One reads through the New Testament (260 chapters, 7,959 verses, 1281,2253 words in the KJV) and

finds no reference to instrumental accompaniment to singing.

Furthermore, those who have said that psallo demands an instrumental accompaniment to singing themselves will tell you that they can worship acceptably without the accompaniment. Such is a strange position to take if the New Testament demands the accompaniment. A demand is not optional.

In addition, if psallo demands instrumental accompaniment, then each worshiper must play his individual instrument as well as do his own singing. Worship is an individual action between a human being and his God. No one can worship God by proxy, having a choir to do his singing and a piano player to do his playing. If that certain Greek word has two actions wrapped up in it, singing and playing then each Christian is commanded to do both.

The second reason the Greek Orthodox graduate student gave for his church’s excluding instrumental music is because “it is contrary to the nature of Christian worship.” That Christian worship forbids any thing mechanical was well brought out by two Episcopalian scholars, whose church uses instrumental music,

Conybeare and Bowson, in their comments on Ephesians 5:18-19. They saw a fourfold contrast between “the heathen and the Christian practice”; (1) Christians were not to be full of “spirits” (wine) but of the Holy Spirit; (2) Christians were not to sing “the drinking songs of heathen feasts” but “psalms and hymns”; (3) The music of the Christians was not of the lyre (harp) but the melody “of the heart.” (4) The songs of Christians were not “to the praise of Bacchus or Venus, but of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Life and Epistles of St. Paul, II, 408). Also, that instrumental music “is contrary to the nature of Christian worship” was emphasized by Richard Wagner (1813-1883) as he wrote: “Religious feeling finds its most natural expression in vocal utterance, for the human heart is the source of both devotion and song. As one checks on psallo, that Greek word said to demand instrumental accompaniment to the singing, one finds it occurs five times in the New Testament. In four of the occurrences the word “means sing exclusively... with no reference to instrumental accompaniment” (B-G-D, 891):

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EDITORIAL

Types of Worship

In the previous *VIGIL* we discussed the items of worship and the authority for worship. This issue will deal more with attitudes that surround worship. When we worship we “make obeisance” to, “do reverence to”, “pay homage” (Vines 235) to God. It is easy for man to get off track when worshipping. Their hearts can be left off their worship and their worship will not be acceptable. They can incorporate items, which are not authorized by God, and their worship will not be acceptable. Christ warned, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). In spite of the warnings found in God’s inspired word, man creates different types of worship that God finds offensive.

There is worship that is **vain**. In Matthew 15 the scribes and Pharisees come to Jesus to ask Him, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders” (Matthew 15:2)? Christ continues by pointing out their hypocrisy. “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:7-9). There were two reasons why their worship was vain. First, it was because their heart was not in what they were doing. They were simply “going through motions.” Are any of us guilty of this? Do you ever come to worship and our mind is a million miles away? Wisdom would have our minds on Christ and him crucified, not baseball, basketball, hunting, or other things of this world. Secondly, their worship was vain because they were substituting a man made doctrine for what God had authorized. Many get into trouble today with this attitude.

You might hear someone say, “What is wrong with it?” Others will ask, “Where does the Bible say you CAN’T do it?” Whereas we ask, “Where does the Bible give me authority of do that?” We need to be careful that our worship is not vain.

There are those who worship **ignorantly**. In Athens, on Mars’ hill, Paul made a statement concerning ignorant worship. “For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (Acts 17:23). The Athenians were ignorant of God; therefore, true worship was not possible. Wayne Jackson, in his commentary, *The Acts of the Apostles*, writes: “The Athenians were woefully ignorant in so many respects. They knew not their true origin, not their destiny. They had not a clue as to the nature of their sinful destiny. They had not a clue as to the nature of their sinful predicament, nor the remedy for it. It is a most deplorable circumstance when we ‘know not,’ and yet ‘know not that we know not’” (223). When this attitude prevails, man seems to devise what he likes in worship. It is this attitude of ignorance, which fuels the entertainment craze in worship. Edwin Jones wrote in *The Spiritual Sword*, concerning the attitude of some about entertainment: “Performance is given a premium with orchestration and choreography called upon to create the right moods and feelings necessary to truly experience the worship event” (*Performance or Participation*; Vol. 24; January 1993; p. 30). Outward entertainment will never establish the correct spirit that the worshipper must have. When Christ said God is a Spirit and that we “must worship him in spirit...” (John 4:24), He is speaking of our hearts. For our worship to be true, we must understand what we are doing. If we don’t come to worship with all of our

mind, soul and spirit then our worship is going to be ignorant.

Will worship is practiced by some. Paul warned the church at Colosse, “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh” (Colossians 2:20-23). David Lipscomb in his commentary on *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, wrote: “Will worship is after our own will. It is self-chosen; and for this single reason is a departure from allegiance to God” (287). Burton Coffman wrote, “Will-worship means the kind of actions engaged in because they please the worshipper, and not because they were commanded by the Lord” (390). “I like it” is the only authority that some need in their worship! When this is the case, we truly have forgotten to whom worship is directed. It is not for our pleasing, but God (cf. John 4:24).

True worship is what God authorizes and accepts. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). If our worship is acceptable to God it will be because we have approached the throne of grace and mercy with the right attitude and authorized items of worship. There will be no substitute!

Questions:

1. What is worship?
2. What is vain worship?
3. What is ignorant worship?
4. What is will worship?
5. Is there any way that man can substitute for what God has authorized in worship and his worship be acceptable to God?

Helps For Worship

Tom Larkin

Worship, which involves acts of homage or reverence that are paid to God, is vital to the Christian life. True worship demands reverence on the part of the worshipper and is carried out through those actions prescribed by God in his word. This being true, worship would be improved by anything that increases our reverence for God and assists our obeying Him.

Certain preparations beforehand can improve our worship. The Jews had a day of preparation before the Sabbath (Mark 15:42). Jesus' disciples prepared for the observance of the Passover (Matthew 26:17). Without a doubt, the most important preparation we can make for worship is to make sure that our heart is right with God. David wrote, "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). That spirit within us will guarantee earnestness and reverence in worship. James calls upon us to "draw near to God," and to "cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8). If we are to be allowed to draw near to God, our life must be lived in harmony with his will. This may involve resolving problems with a brother in Christ before we worship (Matthew 5:23, 24). Again, family problems may have to be settled so that our prayers are not hindered (1 Peter 3:7). Frequently, one leading prayer at the beginning of worship will call for us to remove worldly thoughts as we enter into worship. Just as we would wipe dirt from our shoes as we enter our homes, we must remove worldly considerations from our mind so that we can give attention to spiritual matters.

Likewise, physical preparation for worship is important. Late Saturday night revelry is no way to prepare for Sunday morning worship. Sunday

mornings filled with frantic, last minute searches for Bibles, class books, ties or shoes do not prepare the heart to enter into the very throne room of God for worship. Much more could be added concerning preparations prior to worship, but underlying all of our preparation for worship should be to remember into **Whose Presence** we are coming. That knowledge should make us seriously consider the need to be prepared for worship.

Such remembrance should lead to reverent participation during worship. Worship is not the place for balancing checkbooks, filing fingernails, visiting with a neighbor, reading magazines or talking on cell phones, yet all of these activities and many more have been observed in the assembly. How can one engage in such and think that he is displaying the reverence that God deserves? Worship is not a spectator event and yet many approach it so. Perhaps this explains why some Christians are bored with worship and complain that it lasts too long. In such cases, the problem is not with the worship, but with the worshipper. If we have made the proper preparations and participate with the recognition that we are in God's presence, then worship will be spiritually uplifting and refreshing. How could a person be bored with partaking of the Lord's Supper if he focuses his mind on the Lord who suffered and died for him? How could a person sing from the heart praises to the God who saved him and be bored while doing so? How could a person enter the very throne room of God in prayer without being uplifted? The problem is a lack of reverence on the part of the worshipper and the only remedy is for the heart to be made right.

Finally, reflection following worship would be helpful to us. If

worship does not affect our lives beyond the doors of the church building, then we have not received the benefit that God intended. Just as birds ate the seeds on the wayside soil, so the devil seeks to take away the word from the heart before one can believe it and be saved (Luke 8:12). How long after the sermon do you still consider its message? Do you meditate upon the words that you have sung with God's people? In Psalm 73 the psalmist admitted to having a problem understanding what was going on around him. He saw the wicked flourish and the righteous suffer. But his confusion was resolved when he "went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (v. 17). True worship has a way of putting life into the proper perspective. A similar concern is uttered in Psalm 77 and again, the psalmist found resolution to his problem in worship. "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (v. 13). Therefore, he decided, "I will remember the works of the Lord" and "I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings" (v. 11, 12). Worship can have a lasting effect for good in our lives if we will take time to reflect upon it.

Because of the benefit we can gain from it, let us seek to improve our worship of Almighty God.

Questions

1. Discuss how worship is vital to a Christian's life.
2. Discuss some practical ways we should prepare for worship.
3. What are some ways we can insure reverence in worship?
4. Explain how reflection upon a worship service can increase our faithfulness to God.
5. What should parents do to help children learn the importance of worship?

Hindrances To Worship

Sam Willcut

This article will by no means be an exhaustive list of the many things that could hinder our worship, because space will not allow me to discuss them all. Naturally, the background of all hindrances to worship would be rooted in an improper relationship with God and improper relationships with man. Many develop an improper relationship with God through a lack of respect for his word, which is our authority for matters in worship. Name any change to godly worship, and such is rooted in disrespect for God's authority in his word. In addition, improper relationships with others do not produce the unity that centers in worship (cf. Matthew 5:21-26). In view of these, notice several hindrances to worship.

False attitudes form a major hindrance to worship. First, consider the false attitude of self-righteousness. When Jesus discussed the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, he epitomized the self-righteousness of the Pharisees (Luke 18:9-14). This same attitude led to the many problems Paul faced in battling Judaizing teachers, which is at the background of Paul's remarks in Galatians 1:6-10. Another false attitude that hinders worship is irreverence. When Isaiah approached the throne of God in his vision of worship, his understanding of a holy God brought about a spirit of reverence (Isaiah 6:1-7). God demands an attitude of reverence in worship (Hebrews 12:28-29), in spite of the many attempts today to change worship with a spirit of irreverence. Another false attitude that hinders worship is the spirit of duty. God does not force anyone to worship him. Rather, he desires worshippers to do so freely, voluntarily and gladly. We can glean this principle from the example of the three young men in Daniel 3. Despite Nebuchadnezzar's

attempts, he could not force these men to worship his idol. Since worship is not something forced, we should never worship God as if we were. It is not something we have to do, but something we should look forward to doing. Our giving characterizes this—God desires freewill offerings from a cheerful heart (II Corinthians 9:7). Forced worship does not correlate to the kind of service God desires. Another false attitude that hinders worship is ritualism—worshipping God through the motions without uniting heart, soul and mind in the process. Worship of a spiritual being involves the spirit (John 4:24). Consider the memorial of the Lord's Supper as worship. How could the emblems of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine ever be significant as involving our spirit in worship if it was not for our Lord stating, "...this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:23-25)? Ritualism focuses only on the outside and not on the inside. Nevertheless, God uses the outside to get on the inside. For example, the Law of Moses stated many regulations to indicate ceremonial cleanness. If one touched a dead body, for instance, he became unclean and could never approach God for worship in such a state. Through this, God intended to teach them that sin produced uncleanness, just as David stated in Psalm 51:2. Yet, the Pharisees never learned that sin makes us dirty on the inside—their ritualistic worship made them clean on the outside, but hideous on the inside (Matthew 23:25-28). Although the Law of Moses did not cleanse the conscience (Hebrews 9:14) because there was a reminder of sin every year (Hebrews 10:3), the problem was not necessarily with the law, but the individual. God intended to use such to point the individual to his need of a Savior—Jesus. Yet, the roots of many Jews in their false

attitudes of self-righteousness and ritualism caused them to reject their Savior when he came.

Fellowship with false doctrine and immorality hinders worship. Paul chided the church at Corinth for their fellowship with demons as that which hindered their worship (I Corinthians 10:20-21). We cannot hold the hand of God with one hand and false doctrine and immorality with the other. Jeremiah discusses the attempt of the nation of Judah in relying on their temple worship to cover-up their lifestyle of immorality (Jeremiah 7:1-9). Yet, just as their temple worship did not prohibit their captivity of God's judgment, one's attempt to fellowship with immorality and false doctrine will only produce judgment from God (II Corinthians 6:14-18; II John 1:9-11).

A failure to appreciate the significance of worship in light of our redemption also hinders worship. In Exodus 15, when the Israelites realized their deliverance from Pharaoh, they spontaneously worshipped in song. Thus, our worship comes from a heart that appreciates deliverance. Whenever we lose sight of our redemption, this hinders our worship. Our singing will drag, and we begin to fail to participate fully in worship with our mind and heart united.

In conclusion, these are but a few examples of the many things that could hinder worship. We should always strive to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Questions

1. What are some other hindrances to worship not discussed in this article?
2. What are some ways that brethren have created a spirit of irreverence in worship?
3. What are some of the false doctrines brethren in the church today have fellowshiped that hinders worship?

The Purpose Of Worship

Bobby Liddell

Jesus said, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10).

The purpose of Christian worship is to give obeisance, pay homage, and show respect to God—with proper attitudes and actions which He has authorized. We must approach Him with the same attitude of those who lived under the Old Law: “Give unto the LORD the glory [*due*] unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:29; cf. Psalms 29:2). The God of heaven and earth is worthy of the Christian’s worship, for worship means to bow the knee to one who is worthy; to kiss toward. “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker” (Psalms 95:6).

Properly understood, worship involves intent, attitude, action, and offering/sacrifice, all motivated by loving respect for the One worshiped, and guided by obedience to Him. Without understanding of that which worship involves, we can never fulfill the purpose of worship.

Note what the Scriptures teach about worship to God. “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [*is*] Jealous, [*is*] a jealous God” (Exodus 34:14). “But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice” (2 Kings 17:36). The purpose of worship is to offer such worship to God, Who has manifested His great power so wonderfully.

Man should worship God alone, because of His greatness, majesty, power, glory, honor, and goodness.

Nebuchadnezzar asked the three Hebrew youths, who refused to bow down and worship the image he had

made, “Who [*is*] that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” (Daniel 3:15). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we [*are*] not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be [*so*], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver [*us*] out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up (Daniel 3:16-18).

Thus, the purpose of worship is NOT to elevate other gods to equality with, or superiority to, the one true, living God (cf. Matthew. 6:24; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).

And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, [*even*] all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven (Deuteronomy 4:19). And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish (Deuteronomy 8:19). Take heed to your-selves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them (Deuteronomy 11:16). There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god (Psalms 81:9). And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt (Jeremiah 25:6).

Again, Jesus said: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father

seeketh such to worship him. God [*is*] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [*him*] in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

True worshipers know the purpose of worship is to give reverence in praise to the true Object of Christian worship—God (Luke 4:8), offering obeisance in spirit; that is, from the heart, and in truth; that is, according to God’s Word (John 4:24; 17:17). Therefore, our worship must not be offered to any other one—or to any other thing (cf. Colossians 3:5). It should be our purpose to worship in spirit and in truth—not in vain (Matthew 15:9); not in ignorance (Acts 17:23), nor in accordance with our own wills (Colossians 2:23).

True worshipers know God has determined what He will accept in worship (and surely, as Creator, has the right to do so), and has revealed what He has authorized true worshipers to do. Thus, worship of God, as shown by the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), the New Testament under which we live (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 9:15), involves praise, adoration, bowing before, and honoring the sovereign God of the universe—in accordance with His divinely given directions. This is the purpose of worship.

Does man benefit from true worship? Surely, but Christian worship is God-centered; thus, our focus is upon offering reverential praise to Him—in the way He has prescribed. Therefore, the purpose of worship is NOT entertainment of man, and the worshiper’s intent should not be, “What can I get out of worship,” but “What can I put into worship that I may please my Maker, and praise, honor, and glorify Him in a way acceptable to Him?”

Worship Benefits and Blessings

Jerry L. Martin

The importance and significance of worship cannot be over emphasized. Nothing else is more important for obedient children of God to regularly and faithfully assemble on the first day of each week and worship Him. All other activities of the church should be so structured to initiate and sustain a desire in each saint to be drawn to worship their God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). No other activity or involvement in the church should be viewed as a substitute for regular attendance at every worship assembly. Yet, there are many who do not see any benefits or blessings in worship as God has prescribed it. You hear some folks ask, "Do I have to go to worship?" We probably have heard people say things like, "I just don't get anything out of worship, so why should I go?" Jesus addressed such attitudes with these words; "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9). If our motivation in worship is not to please God we will forfeit the benefits and blessings that true worshippers enjoy. In fact, if we don't have the right attitude about our worship we will lose the favor we have with God and the influence we have on our fellowman. But, what are some of the benefits and blessings that Christians receive when we worship God in the way He has prescribed?

First, the greatest benefit and blessing is that we can please God. He is seeking "true worshippers" those who will worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24). When we have the right attitude toward God and His instructions for our lives we will be drawn to God and our desire will be to please Him. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up

spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5). God is pleased when we reverently worship Him through singing, teaching, praying, communing in the taking of the Lord's supper, and giving in a willing manner (Colosians 3:16-17; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29; 1 Colosians 16:1, 2). Like Jesus, the Son of God, may we each strive to be able to say, "...the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).

Secondly, there is great benefit and blessing in being able to praise God. God has been so good to us and is the giver of very good and perfect gift. Worship allows us to acknowledge our recognition of and appreciation for His goodness. The word Hallelujah means, "Praise Jehovah." It describes the privilege of being a Christian and the great pleasures of Christian worship, the offering of homage and reverent praise to God. We often sing the song entitled, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Our assemblies ought to be filled with such praise. As the Hebrew write records, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12). When our worship is properly offered to God, one of the countless benefits afforded the child of God is an enriched life that will be of great blessing to those still lost in sin. "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" (Hebrews 13:15). "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

Thirdly, there are great benefits and blessings in being able to provoke God's people to love and good works. God designed worship in a way that not only would He be pleased and

praised, but, His Son's church would be constantly provoked to faithfulness. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Worship provides an opportunity for Christians to edify, exhort, encourage, and inspire one another. "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 to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:16-17).

In Genesis twenty-five we have the sad story of Esau selling the blessings of his birthright for a mess of red pottage (Genesis 25:29-34). A sadder story still is that many Christian today "sell" the benefits and blessings that God has provided true worshippers in order to gain mundane and temporary gratifications. May we each determine to worship God faithfully in spirit and in truth. As we reflect on the benefits and blessings that are ours in Christ, may we sincerely, freely, and constantly declare in our worship, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Questions

1. What benefits and blessings do we gain from worship?
2. Can you name other blessings and benefits gained from worship?
3. How does our motivation in worship determine blessings we receive from worship?

Innovations James E. Rogers

Webster defines “innovation” as “the introduction of something new” (436). In the context of authorized worship, the introduction of something new would refer to that for which there is no Bible authority. Everything we do must be authorized by God (Colossians 3:17). When one comes to worship God, he must offer that which God has authorized to be offered. Man is not left to do that which is right in his own eyes (Judges 20:25).

Worship is to be offered to God, not man. Innovations are introduced into worship when the emphasis is placed on man and what appeals to his likes. Frank J. Dunn wrote: “Practices that appeal to the physical senses rather than our spiritual understanding are of no value in Christian worship and are displeasing to God. Some examples are tongue-speaking, musical concerts, choirs, singing with instruments, hand clapping, foot stomping, songs that are not spiritual, devotionals in the dark, hand holding, soul talks, personal witnessing, story telling, responsive readings, preachers who entertain, song leaders who put on a show, weekend retreats and other additions to the divine pattern.”

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, introduced innovations into the worship of Jehovah and, by so doing, “made Israel to sin” (1 Kings 14:16). When one reviews Jeroboam’s innovations, he will get a picture of the kind of thinking that has caused people today to introduce them into the worship of Jehovah.

Innovations come from the heart of man, not the Word of God (1 Kings 12:26,27). Jeroboam did not seek Jehovah’s permission to act. He was motivated by his own selfish interests and was working to do that which he thought was best for him. The innovations that are introduced into worship today are introduced because

someone thinks that will accomplish what he wants accomplished.

Innovations come from the counsel of men, not the counsel found in the Word of God (1 Kings 12:28). There is some discussion as to whether Jeroboam counseled with his advisors or with himself. Whatever is the case, the counsel could go no higher than the subjective thinking of man. When men get together and decide what they want in worship, one will see praise teams, solos, drama, women leaders and the like brought into the worship setting. If men really want to succeed at this subjective worship, they ought to pass out a form and let the people tell them what they want in worship and then do that. After all, the more, the merrier, when it comes to subjective reasoning. Notice what Jeroboam’s counsel caused him to do.

1. Jeroboam decided that Jehovah could be worshiped through two golden calves (28). The Law of Moses forbade this making of golden calves (Exo. 20:4). God’s Word had been given on this subject, but that didn’t matter to Jeroboam. He wanted to do that which would keep the crowds with him. Jeroboam’s authority for this action rested in himself, not God.

2. Jeroboam decided that it was too much for the people to do what Jehovah had commanded (28). Jehovah had given instructions concerning the observances of the feasts (Leviticus 23). Jehovah had given instructions as to where the feasts were to be observed (Deuteronomy 12:1-14). Now, Jeroboam tells God’s people that it is too much for them to comply with these commands. The authority by which Jeroboam made this decision went no higher than himself.

3. Jeroboam decided that he could make worship houses of high places (31). Jehovah had spoken on where worship was to be offered.

There was no authority for the high places to be used. This may have satisfied the masses, but it did not satisfy Jehovah.

4. Jeroboam decided that anyone could be a priest (30). Jehovah had limited the priesthood to the house of Aaron (Exodus 28,29). There was no authority from Jehovah to appoint anyone a priest that was not of this descent. Jeroboam ignored revelation on this matter and did that which pleased him. When Jehovah’s Word is ignored, anything goes!

5. Jeroboam decided that worship could be held when he decided (32, 33). Jehovah had ordained that the feast of tabernacles be held on “the fifteenth day of the seventh month” (Numbers 29:12). Jeroboam decided that the eighth month would be fine for this feast and so instituted it. If Jeroboam were alive today, he would decide that the Lord’s Supper could be observed on Thursday or Saturday night, at a picnic or wedding, with just as much authority as in the first day of the week assembly.

Innovations are sinful (1 Kings 12:30). That which is done without Bible authority is sinful. Man is not at liberty to decide for himself what is to be done in religion. God has not placed how He is to be worshiped within the realm of option. We are obligated to follow Biblical teaching in this regard. To introduce something new into this arrangement is to violate Jehovah’s will in the matter. Let us be content with God’s revelation! **QUESTIONS**

1. What is “innovation” as it concerns worship?
2. What causes innovations to be introduced into worship?
3. List two sources from which innovations come.
4. What are some of the things that will be introduced when man is the authority in worship?
5. Are innovations sinful?

SOURCES

Webster’s Seventh
NewCollegiateDictionary,(Springfield, MA: G. & C.
Merriam Co., 1971).

Is There Any Harm in Instrumental Music? by Hugo McCord-----continued from page 16

“...I will acknowledge you among the Gentiles, and I will sing (psallo) to your name (Romans 15:9)...I will sing (psallo) with the spirit and also I will sing (psallo) with the understanding (I Corinthians 14:15)... Is any happy? Let him sing praise (psallo) (James 5:13).

In the fifth occurrence of psallo (Ephesians 5:19), the context forbids the meaning “sing,” for it would have Paul commanding “singing (aido) and singing (psallo).” Since the earliest meaning of psallo (strengthened from psō, to touch) is to strike, pull, twang, pluck, it is easy to see that Paul was commanding “singing and playing.”

But what kind of playing did he mean? He did not command that it be done on a harp (as David did, 1 Samuel 16:23; Psalm 33:3), but on the “heart.” If the instrument is a harp, then the playing necessarily is literal, with each worshiper having his own harp (as David). But the apostle specified a nonphysical instrument, the human heart (the mind, Genesis 6:5; Acts 8:22), on which literal playing (striking, pulling, twanging, plucking) is impossible. The context therefore demands this kind of translation of Ephesians 5:19: Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing

(aido) and plucking (psallo) the strings of your heart to the Lord.

A Violation of Four Divine Laws

Four principles in the New Testament are rejected when one introduces worship by machinery:

The Law of Faith. “Faith comes by hearing” the “word of Christ” (Romans 10:17), by which word we sing, pray, read the Scriptures, contribute, and partake of the Lord’s Supper (1Corinthians 11:26; 16:1-2; Colossians 3:16; 4:16; 1 Timothy 2:1-2). The law of faith forbids Christians from going “beyond the things that are written” (1 Corinthians 4:6, ASV). “Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God” (2 John 9, NIV).

The Law of Worship. Acceptable worship must be (1) with the right attitude in one’s heart (John 4:24), and (2) in harmony with the truth (that is, his divine word, John 4:24; 16:13, 17:17; Colossians 3:17), and (3) free of “the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9).

The Law of Unity. Prior to the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) is purity “first pure, then peaceful,” (James 3:17) in “the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9: John 12:48). But when the doctrine of Christ is not at issue, the law of unity

calls upon every Christian to do his best to keep a congregation together, knowing that “strife...dissensions, factions” are the “works of the flesh” 1 Corinthians 1:10; (Galatians 5:19-20).

The Law of Love. “Let brotherly love continue” (Hebrews 13:1). When unselfish love takes over, then a Christian has “regard, each of you, not for your own things, but each one for the things of others” (Philippians 2:4). But brotherly love was non-existent at Midway, Kentucky, in 1859, when a melodeon was brought into the auditorium and used in the worship, forcing some Christians to leave. The leaders loved the sound of a machine more than the fellowship of other Christians. In a glass case now in the library of Midway college is a melodeon “in a place of honor, “ in remembrance actually of a violation of the law of love (Spiritual Sword, October, 1978 p. 20).

He who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. We have this commandment from Him, that he loves God must also love his brother (1 John 4:20-21).

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