

# Back to Bible Basics

## Issue 31

### Mechanical Instruments in Worship

Brett Rutherford

In the book of First Corinthians Paul addresses the errors in the worship practices of that congregation. Paul regulates all five acts of worship in this letter. He speaks of the manner lessons are to be presented in chapters fourteen through fifteen. He corrects the Corinthian's abuse of the Lord's Supper in chapter eleven. The apostle also addresses the manner of their giving, and the day of the week they were to gather for worship (16:1, 2). In I Cor. 14:15 Paul commands the Corinthians to pray and sing.

The way in which we are to express ourselves in song is brought out in Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19. These verses stipulate that we are only to employ the INSTRUMENT OF THE HEART in singing songs of praise to God. This logically eliminates the use of any other instruments. For centuries after the church was established "Christians" understood that they were not to employ man made instruments in worship to God. In A.D. 345 Augustine wrote, "musical instruments were not used. The pipe, tabret, and the harp here associate so intimately with the sensual heathen cults, as well as with the wild revelries and shameless performances of the degenerate theatre and circus, it is easy to understand the prejudices against their use in worship." **(Augustine 354 A.D., describing the singing at Alexandria under Athanasius)**

The second century Christian writer, Clement of Alexandria, makes it clear that singing in worship was to be carried out without the use of the mechanical instrument. Consider the following excerpt from his assessment of song worship in his "Readings": "Moreover, King David the harpist, whom we mentioned just above, urged us toward the truth and

away from idols. So far was he from singing the praises of daemons that they were put to flight by him with the true music; and when Saul was possessed, David healed him merely by playing the harp. The Lord fashioned man a beautiful, breathing instrument, after His own image and assuredly He Himself is an all-harmonious instrument of God, melodious and holy, the wisdom that is above this world, the heavenly Word." ... "He who sprang from David and yet was before him, the Word of God, scorned those lifeless instruments of lyre and cithara. By the power of the Holy Spirit He arranged in harmonious order this great world, yes, and the little world of man too, body and soul together; and on this many-voiced instruments of the universe He makes music to God, and sings to the human instrument. "For thou art my harp and my pipe and my temple"**(Clement of Alexandria, 185AD, Readings p. 62)**

Clement of Alexandria was not a divinely inspired writer. His works are not our authority. However, his writings show us that Christians living in the second century understood that God had not authorized the use of mechanical instruments in worship. It is obvious that the early church respected the authority of the silence of the Scriptures on the use of mechanical instrument in worship. If God specified the way worship was to be carried out, then everything that God did not mention was excluded and condemned.

The need to respect the silence of Scripture is highlighted in Heb. 7:11-20. The writer points out that God had declared that the priests were to come from the tribe of Levi under the Mosaic system. God did not have to mention the other tribes by name and state that the priests were not to come from those tribes. God only needed to declare that the priests were to come from the tribe of Levi. This command excluded men serving as priests who were from other tribes. The point of the inspired writer is that Jesus would not have been authorized to serve as high priest under the Old Covenant because He was born into the tribe of Judah of which God said nothing concerning the priesthood. However, we are under a new covenant which stipulates that Jesus is now our high priest, and all those who submit to him from all lands and tribes are now designated as priests under the New Covenant (I Pet. 2:9). 

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## What God Hath Joined Together, Let No Man Separate

Ian McPherson

“So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.” – Matt. 19:6. This verse assures us, that no matter how hard men may try, it is impossible for anyone to separate what God has joined together. The verse applies to marriage, but the same principle applies equally to all of God’s laws. Let us consider some things that God has joined together in His plan of redemption that cannot be separated by men.

**FAITH AND GRACE:** “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”. Rom. 5:1-2. These verses show that grace must be accessed by faith. Grace is God’s favour and faith is God’s condition for receiving grace. It is impossible therefore to be saved by “faith only” or “grace only”. They go together like fingers in a glove.

**WORKS AND JUSTIFICATION:** “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”. James 2:24. To say that we are not justified by works is just as foolish as to say we not justified by grace or faith. Works, grace, or faith cannot be separated from justification. “Faith only” is a doctrine of the devil (Jam. 2:18-21).

**REPENTANCE, BAPTISM AND REMISSION OF SINS:** “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” - Acts 2:38. Repentance and baptism are joined by the Greek word “kai” which means “in addition to”. Therefore, both must go together. We cannot be saved by baptism “only” or by repentance “only” (See also Mk 16:16, 1 Pet. 3:21, Acts 22:16 and Gal. 3:26-27). Baptism cannot save a person who has not repented, and repentance cannot save a person who has not been baptized.

**OBEDIENCE AND THE GOSPEL.** “And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”. - 2 Thess. 1:7-9. Although the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), it cannot save unless it is obeyed. There must therefore be a clear, identifiable pattern of teaching to define it (Rom. 6:17-18, and Heb. 5:9).

**CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH:** “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” – Col. 1:18. Vast amounts of people have gone to their graves thinking that the church has nothing to do with their salvation. However, it is just as impossible for a human body to be separated from its head and to live, as it is to separate the body of Christ from its Head and be saved (Eph 5:23, Acts 20:28).

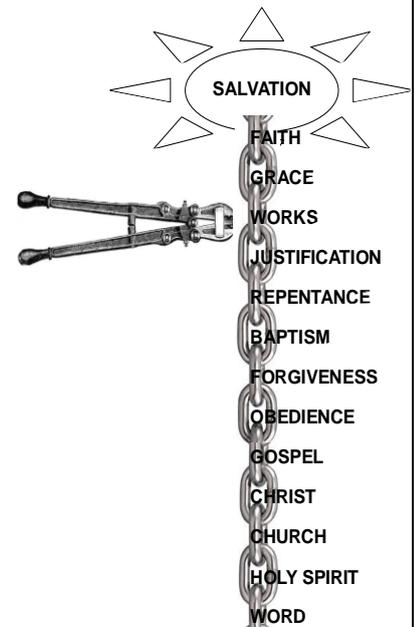
**THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD:** “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” – Eph. 6:17. When Christ was on earth, He did not reveal all of His word. However, after He died on the cross and was exalted to God’s right hand, He sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles who revealed all truth and wrote it down in the New Testament (Jn. 16:12-14, Eph. 3:1-5). The inspired word given through the Spirit contains “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Jude 3). Therefore, the human mind cannot receive any information or motivation from the Spirit except through His message.

**Would anyone who wishes to be saved dare to remove any of the links from this chain?.**

There are some who would willingly remove some of them, but the bible teaches that all of the links in the chain are necessary for salvation.

Not one of them alone could secure our soul, and the absence of any one of them would cause our soul to be lost

Remember, what God has joined together, let no man separate. 📖



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