

Instrumental music is wrong because God specified that we sing. Just as Noah was not to trim the ark in Oak (it would have looked so good), so also we cannot "trim" our music with instruments (because they sound good).

Conclusion...

The silence of the scriptures offers no grounds for the introduction of instrumental music in worship services. Much more could be offered by way of examples from the scriptures; but we restrict ourselves to these with the confidence that you have an open mind.

Next week we will consider three other arguments offered for instrumental music from the scriptures. We will also see the logical end (result) of the world's approach to Bible authority.

The Carriage Drive Messenger



Volume 4

March 8, 2009

Number 9

NEWSWORTHY NOTES:

This section removed to preserve member's privacy

Radio Programs: WJLS 99.5FM every Sunday at 9:00AM

Website: www.beckleychurch.com

The *Carriage Drive Messenger*
is published weekly by the
Carriage Drive church of Christ,
Beckley, WV
Editor: Bob Pulliam
Building Phone: 252-8108

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday: Bible Study 10:00am
Morning Worship 10:50am
Evening Worship 6:30pm
Wednesday: Bible Study 7:30pm

THE MUSIC WITH WHICH WE WORSHIP

by Bob Pulliam

“Why don't you have music down there at your church?” The question always comes, and I always wonder at the inaccuracy within it. I know that the person means "instrumental music"; but the impression left is that we do not believe in worshipping God with *any* music at all! I am careful to keep my cool, believing that they had no intention of misrepresenting my position. And a good reply is, “Why do *you have instruments* of music in your worship services?”

Think about it for just a minute. Does anyone think that worshipping *without* instrumental music is wrong?.... So why are we on the defensive? Why should I feel as if I am on trial? Singing is commanded in the New Testament, and that is what I do. The real question is, “Why do the sectarians use instrumental music in their worship?” Many answers might be given (sounds good; keeps up tempo; keeps up pitch; frees up singer's inhibitions; etc...), but only those which propose Bible authority are worthy of consideration.

A Clarification...

Now don't get me wrong. I am not saying that instrumental music in general is wrong. I sit down at my piano every once in a while when no one is listening. I also pick up my guitar to remind myself how stiff my fingers have become. I have a banjo, a mandolin, and a dulcimer (OK, it's in pieces. But I do plan to put it together some day). This is not just about

playing an instrument. *Under consideration here is the use of instrumental music in worship to God. Has God authorized it for use in giving praise to His holy name?* If you get to the end of this article and conclude that I believe instrumental music (in general) is sinful, you have missed the mark. Return to this paragraph and start again!

Does Silence Give Consent...

There have been two attitudes toward God's word through the ages. One is that where the Bible is silent, man is at liberty to act. The other is that where the Bible is silent, man is restricted by that silence to the specifications of God. Silence does not restrict alone, for God always specifies His will. The silence of God is a void into which man dare not leap; for when he does there is certain death (*e.g.* Leviticus 10:1f). The idea that silence gives consent is a foolish and willful disregard for logic, reason, and past examples from the word of God. Even our everyday lives illustrate this truth.

If I give you some money, and send you to the store for a loaf of Sunbeam, Texas Toast bread (yes, they sell that in WV), I will expect what I have specified. If you bring Thin Sliced I will be very disappointed in you, and you will be able to see the logic and reason behind my displeasure (*i.e.* you didn't get what I told you to get). If I send you, and you bring back the bread I asked for, *and* a jar of jelly, you will have gone beyond my instruction and specification for my money's expenditure. I will exact from you the money spent on the cereal. Simple logic and reason are expressed in the idea of specifics. When we specify what we want, we expect it exactly! And how much more our creator? He possesses all knowledge and wisdom. Do we presume to be smarter and wiser than he? We do when we go beyond the specifications of His word. It is as if we say, "God did not have the sense to authorize instruments, and so we'll put them in for Him." Such is blasphemy!

We find Bible examples of people involved in such blasphemous folly. Already cited above is the case of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1f). Fire would seem to be fire, and such would also seem to be a slight thing; but not when God has specified what He wants. Nadab and Abihu leaped into a void of silence and died. Another example is David's movement of the Ark of the Covenant (I Chron 13:1 - 10; 15:12 & 13). God had specified the means for moving the ark, and even the people who should do so; but David leaped into the void and reaped disaster. God did not say, "Thou shalt not use an ox cart." But then, did he really need to?

Silence in the word of God does not give consent for action. That which is done must be in accordance with the specifics that God has given.

Silence is a road-block in the word of God that brings nothing but deafening condemnation when violated.

Specifics Exclude All Else...

When one specifies something, it excludes all else. The classic example is God's command for Noah to build an ark. God told Noah to use Gopher wood. Now we all know that the use of Oak, Pine, Larch, or Elm would be a violation of this command. But why? God did not say, "Thou shalt not use Oak, Pine, Larch, or Elm to build the ark." Yet we understand that specifying the wood excludes all others in that class. If God had told Noah to build an ark out of wood, Noah could have used any kind of wood he wanted. "Gopher wood" was the means by which Noah would obey God. Oak, Pine, Larch, or Elm were all a silence into which Noah refused to leap.

The author of Hebrews used the subject of specifics in making an argument regarding priesthood. In Hebrews 7:14 he pointed out that Moses spoke nothing concerning priests from the tribe of Judah. God did not say, "Thou shalt not select priests from Judah." Yet the author of Hebrews uses this as an argument of force regarding Jesus. He descended from Judah and therefore cannot be a priest under the Law of Moses. Why? Because it was silent about such, and specified that the priests be taken from the tribe of Levi. The specific (Levi) excluded all others in the same class (including Judah). Even Jesus would not be an exception!

By the same token, when God commands certain specifics, expedience may be found for the work at hand. God specified Gopher wood, but using a hammer, saw, or chisel would not violate such. They would be a means of doing with the Gopher wood as God had commanded. Oak or Pine would have been a substitution and/or addition to God's command. I'm sure Oak trim would have looked nice; but God said Gopher wood was to be used!

Two Kinds of Music...

The Bible does not explicitly say, "Thou shalt not use an instrument of music in worship to God." The Bible *does say*, "sing and make melody in your heart" (Eph 5:19). The Bible specifies that we *sing*.

There are two kinds of rendered music. There is vocal, and instrumental. God specified vocal music (singing). God said nothing regarding instrumental music in New Testament worship. Here is the void of silence into which our modern religious world leaps (because it sounds good). Instrumental music is not wrong *just because* God says nothing about it.