

# Why David Used Instrumental Music

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## Appeal made to David for New Testament use

When we have religious discussions with others, we are often asked why the church that Jesus established does not use instrumental music in their worship. Many people have grown up in religious denominations and never questioned their use. It is just accepted. Those who justify their use often refer to David and say that he used them in the Old Testament worship. Since it was acceptable to God then, God should have no problem with our use of them today. After all, David was a man after God's own heart. So if we strive to be like David, and seek God's own heart, how could He not be pleased with our efforts to worship Him?

We often look to David for many examples, both good and bad. The greatest example we learn from David is loving God and his commandments. *He said, "And I will delight myself in your commandments, which I have loved."* (Ps. 119:47). We should learn the importance of this. Even John said: *"Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments"* (1 Jn. 5:2).

## God's Old Testament command for music in worship - The Law of Moses

The law of Moses, with its many laws regarding social and religious life, is silent in the use of music of the tabernacle worship. The children of God were not commanded to worship God in song. I am not sure why this was excluded from the law. Some have suggested that the Israelites could have turned the worship into a riotous event instead of seeing the seriousness of God's worship and keeping his commandment (Ex. 32:6).

Reading through the law, the only command I found for a musical instrument was for horns to be blown for various reasons. These horns were intended to be used for signals to alert the Israelites (Num10:1-10). They were also blown for various religious reasons. *"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God."* (Num. 10:10). Also, Moses did write a song (Deut. 32) and commanded that it be taught to all of Israel to be sung. However, it was not commanded that it be sung during the tabernacle worship.

What we do not see is the use of different types of instruments in worship that are found in later years during David's life.

## Why did David introduce instruments of music into the worship?

We must ask ourselves, “How did the use of instruments to praise God become part of His temple worship?” Is it possible that David just arbitrarily decided that was what he wanted to do, and did it? Did he think God would approve of his adding to, and altering His law? David was, after all, a man after God’s own heart. Why would God not be happy with his decision?

The answer to how the instruments were introduced into worship can be found in 2 Chronicles 29. When Hezekiah became king, he reopened the temple, repaired the damage caused by Ahaz, and ordered the priests to cleanse and sanctify the temple for worship. Finally, we read in 2 Chron. 29:25, “*And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet: **for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets.***” This proves to us that it was God who made the decision and that David did not act on his own initiative.

One of two things evidently happened. Either David had Nathan or Gad ask God's permission to use instruments in the temple worship, and that God approved it and commanded that they be used. Or God commanded this without being asked. Either way, what we must understand is that their use was by the commandment of the Lord and not by the authority of David.

## God’s New Testament command concerning music in worship

Many people today do not understand that we no longer live under the law of Moses. There is a reason why we cannot appeal to the Old Law for what we do in our worship. The New Testament teaches us that the Law of Moses was fulfilled in Jesus (Matt. 5:17), it has been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14) and we cannot find our justification in it (Gal. 2:16). If we attempt to find justification by the Law of Moses, then we become a debtor to do the whole law (Gal. 5:3). Any attempt to live by that law causes us to be separated from God and fallen from His grace (Gal. 5:4). Why then, are people seeking justification from the Old Law to use instrumental music under the Law of Christ?

God did give us commands about the type of music he will accept in worship, and that is to sing, (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12). Anything else is not approved by God. So we must ask ourselves, “Do we want to be like David, a person after God’s own heart? One who delights in, and loves the commandments of God?” If that is our desire, then you should worship God with the only musical instrument created by God — Our voices!