

## MUSIC IN THE CHURCH

It is not unusual, when one with whom I am having a discussion discovers that I am a member of the church of Christ, for him to respond with something like, "Oh, you are the people who don't use music." This response is likely not meant in disrespect, but it rather indicates an image which we have in the eyes of those who do not understand.

Yes, we do use music. In fact, the majority of us enjoy very much the pleasure, contentment, and joy resulting from wholesome music. Many of us have learned to skillfully play a variety of musical instruments. We also feel that the human voice is capable of singing in a way far superior to any man-made instrument, and we thrill to the beauty and harmony of voices blended in praise to our God.

## PROPER UNDERSTANDING

But the proper understanding is that we do not employ use of mechanical instruments of music in our assemblies of the church. It might be of interest to note that several other religious groups also share our views about praising God with only the human voice. Among these are Greek Orthodox churches (among the largest in number) and Primitive Baptist churches (among the more conservative of the Baptists).

Singing plays a most important role in assemblies of the Lord's church. With it God is praised, and we are uplifted. Perhaps singing might be likened in a service of the church to flowers in the field or forest. It beautifies and makes pleasant the atmosphere which prevails when Christians assemble. Our hearts rejoice when thus prompted to reflect upon our heavenly Father and His abundant blessings. Our voices gladly proclaim His presence in our lives and our thanksgiving for it.

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EVIDENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

While some of these same qualities can also be found in playing musical instruments, we find no example in the Scriptures that early Christians ever engaged in playing instruments in their assemblies. It was not a matter of such instruments not being available, for instruments had for centuries been very common. Reference is made to the harp and organ in verse 21 of the fourth chapter of Genesis. Timbrels and dances were used by

Miriam and other Israelite women in Exodus 15 (about 1496 B.C.), and David used a harp to refresh Saul in 1 Samuel 16:23 (around 1060 B.C.). In 2 Samuel 6:5 we are informed, *"And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals."* After Judah's return from Babylonian captivity (517 B.C.), Nehemiah mentions certain men following Ezra *"with the musical instruments of David the man of God"* (12:36).

### THE OLD TESTAMENT NOT A PATTERN

But the Old Testament is not a pattern for the Christian age. During the periods which it records, especially the era of Israel which preceded the establishment of Christianity, God's people known as Israel constituted a nation which was both civil and spiritual. They acknowledged God and recognized His direction in spiritual matters. But being also a civil nation among other civil nations, they occupied a position not in harmony with what was later to be the spirit of Christianity. During that period the Israelites offered animal sacrifices, burned incense, could have more than one wife, executed criminals, exacted physical punishment, and observed national boundaries. It was during that period that instruments of music were used. None of those practices were observed by the church of the first century, for such practices belonged to an earlier, incomplete era designed to prepare for a more perfect one to follow (Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:1-9). But the Old Testament is not a pattern for the Christian age. During the periods which it records, especially the era of Israel which preceded the establishment of Christianity, God's people known as Israel constituted a nation which was both civil and spiritual. They acknowledged God and recognized His direction in spiritual matters. But being also a civil nation among other civil nations, they occupied a position not in harmony with what was later to be the spirit of Christianity. During that period the Israelites offered animal sacrifices, burned incense, could have more than one wife, executed criminals, exacted physical punishment, and observed national boundaries. It was during that period that instruments of music were used. None of those practices were observed by the church of the first century, for such practices belonged to an earlier, incomplete era designed to prepare for a more perfect one to follow (Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:1-9).

The Lord's church is a spiritual kingdom existing within and among civil nations throughout the world, but it has no

authority to function in a civil capacity as did old Israel . It has a different relationship and a different purpose. It is noteworthy, then, that practices such as those just mentioned were never recorded among early Christians. It is also noteworthy that instruments of music were never mentioned as part of the assemblies of the early church.

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH CHARACTERIZED BY SINGING

But music is mentioned as part of the early Christians' lives. Paul wrote, *"I will...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), *"In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Eph. 5:19), and *"In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Col. 3:16).

The writer of Hebrews quoted Psalms 22:22 in saying, *"In the midst of the church will I SING praise unto thee"* (2:12). In James 5:13 disciples are exhorted, *"Is any merry? let him SING psalms."* It will be evident, of course that each passage refers to SINGING, not use of instruments.

The striking fact is that even though instruments of music were available and could have been used they weren't. It is our purpose to constitute in this century a church identical to that of the first century. This is accomplished by following their God-approved practices and by avoiding that which God has not authorized.

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### APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Does the Bible teach that one must be baptized in order to be saved? If so, how can one reconcile this with the doctrine of faith only?

ANSWER: It seems that in this question, the inquirer assumes that the doctrine of faith only is true. If it were, then the answer to the above question would be that the two could not be reconciled. But where in the scriptures does the Bible teach that all one must do to be saved is have faith? I am sure all agree that we are justified by our faith, but again, where is the passage or passages that teach justification by faith alone? Many times we are led to believe a particular doctrine not

necessarily because the Bible teaches it, but rather because we have been taught that it was true. Remember, the only way to get Biblical answers to Biblical questions is to go the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

If one begins to search the scriptures of the New Testament, he or she will find that there are many passages which teach justification by faith, but nowhere can a verse be found that says faith alone saves (see Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8). In fact there is only one place in the Bible where the words 'faith only' appears. Here I quote James 2:24 *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."* The one and only place in the Bible where 'faith only' is found, it is preceded by the words "not by"!!! As anyone can plainly see, the Bible does not teach salvation by faith only. Many of the advocates of faith only are found terribly inconsistent when at one time they say faith only saves and at the same or even a later time they say that one must repent or confess. If faith only is all that saves, then why do they teach repentance or confession? Faith and repentance and confession is far from faith by itself. Some may then argue that repentance and confession are a part of faith. I agree that the saving faith leads one both to repent and confess, but what of baptism? Where do the scriptures teach that faith includes repentances and confession, but excludes baptism? The truth is that they do not. The New Testament teaches us that the faith that saves is the faith that obeys.

There are many passages of scriptures which teach that baptism along with repentance and confession is necessary in order to be forgiven. Note the following passages:

Mark 16:16 - *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."*

Acts 2:38 - *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*

Acts 8:35-38 - *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he*

*commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."*

*Acts 22:16 - "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."*

*Romans 6:3, 4 - "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death. That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

*Gal. 3:27 - "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*

*I Pet. 3:21 - "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"*

Many other passages could be given, but these should suffice. From the above it is found that:

1. Only he that believes and is baptized will be saved.
2. One must repent and be baptized in order to have the forgiveness of sins.
3. Baptism puts us into Christ.

If baptism is not essential then one can be saved without obeying the Lord or being in Christ and having sins washed away. This indeed is an absurdity. When one has faith he or she will repent, confess, be baptized, and live a faithful life in the service of Christ.

**SAM DICK**  
Cave City, KY

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
June 4 – 8	Load Congregation Load, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) & James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 3 – 8	Taylor's Cross Roads Congregation Roanoke, AL	Bill Prince, Jr. & Chad Prince (Oxford, AL) & Brad Prince (Wedowee, AL)
June 8 – 10	Antioch Congregation Douglasville, GA	Ron Scott (Bloomington, IN)
June 10 – 15	Mt. Carmel Congregation Woodland, AL	Chad Prince (Oxford, AL)
June 11 – 15	Freefield Congregation State Line, MS	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
June 17 – 22 Sun. at 10:30 & 5:00 Mon. - Fri. at 7:00 pm	Hokes Bluff Congregation Hokes Bluff, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June 17 – 22	Ephesus Congregation Ephesus, GA	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 18 – 22	<u>Camp Meeting 2007</u> <u>Sacramento, New Mexico</u>	Various Speakers
June 20 – 22	<u>Summer Fellowship Conference 2007</u> <u>Desoto State Park Fort Payne, AL</u>	Various Speakers
June 21 – 24	Goochtown Congregation Near Eubank, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 22 – 24	Pleasant Ridge Congregation Woodbury, TN	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)

June 25 – 29	Owens Road Congregation Prattville, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 28 – July 1	Marrowbone Congregation Burksville, KY	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
June 29 – July 1 7:00 p.m. Fri. - Sat. 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. Sun.	Chapel Hill Congregation Pell City, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. How old was Adam when his third son, Seth, was born?
2. What was the name of David and Bathsheba's second son?
3. According to Proverbs, on what does the soul of the unfaithful feed?
4. Who was appointed to carry the cross upon which Jesus was to be crucified?
5. Paul said that we should not do what while doing good?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How many towns were given to the priests from the lands of the Israelites tribes? FORTY-EIGHT (Josh. 21:41)
2. According to Isaiah, in the day of victory, who will the Lord slay? LEVIATHAN (Isa. 27:1)
3. Who did Jesus say accuses the Jews? MOSES (John 5:45)
4. The Corinthians were warned not to be "unequally yoked together" with whom? UNBELIEVERS (2 Cor. 6:14)
5. Where was John when he received the revelation? PATMOS (Rev. 1:9)