

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

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*Editor's note:* There was a time when we would print the following article for the benefit of those who are not members of the body of Christ hoping to teach them why the use of instrumental music in worship is unscriptural, thus sinful. However, in recent years there are those who identify themselves as members of the church of Christ who either uphold or will not condemn the use of instrumental music in worship. We commend the following article by Donnie Rader to all our readers and hope that each of us will maintain a proper respect for the authority of God's word. (JH)



## Why We Do Not Use Instrumental Music In Worship

One of the first things that people notice when they visit our worship services is that we don't use instrumental music. Some wonder whether it is a matter of finance, personal preference or a matter of conviction. The reason a flag is raised is that most of the denominations have some form of instrumental music in worship. An organ or piano is most common. However, it is not uncommon to find churches with a full band - including drums and brass instruments. Why do we not use instrumental music in worship?

### It Is Not Authorized

Careful students know that we must have Bible authority for all that we do in service to God. Paul said, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17). To do a thing "in the name of" someone is to do it by their power or authority (Acts 4:7). John wrote that we must abide within the doctrine of Christ (2 Jno. 9).

Bible authority is established by (1) Command, (2) Example or (3) Necessary inference. All three of these were used in settling the matter of circumcision in Acts 15. Without a command or direct statement, an example that is approved of God or some principle that necessarily infers the matter, it is without Bible authority.

To illustrate: what would be wrong with having grape jelly on the Lord's table - along with the bread and fruit of the vine? There is no command to have it. We find no example of such. Furthermore, there is no passage that causes us to conclude that it was used or should be. Thus, there is no Bible authority for it. The same is true with instrumental music. To do something without Bible authority is sinful (2 Jno. 9).

What God did authorize, as far as music is concerned, is singing. Consider the following passages:

*"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"* (Col. 3:16).

*"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Eph. 5:19).

There are seven other passages in the NT that deal with music in worship. All refer to singing (Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Heb. 13:15). There is no passage authorizing the instrument.

God did authorize singing. God did not authorize instrumental

music. Therefore, it is unscriptural.

### **An Addition To The Word of God**

Since God specified singing, we are not at liberty to use any other kind of music. For example, Noah was told to build the ark of "gopher wood" (Gen. 6:14). Had God said, "wood" (leaving it in the generic), Noah would have been at liberty to use any kind of wood. Yet, because God specified "gopher" that eliminated the use of any other kind of wood. To build the ark of oak would not be authorized. To use gopher and oak would not be authorized.

Let's consider again the matter of the Lord's Supper. God specified that the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine should be used (Matt. 26:17-28). If we decide that we want grape jelly to go with our bread, we now have another element on the table and thus an addition to the word of God.

The same is true of music in worship. Had God told us to have music (leaving it in the generic), we could have chosen vocal or instrumental or a combination of both. However, since God specified, singing (Eph. 5:19), other kinds of music are thus eliminated. Instrumental music is therefore an addition to the word of God.

*✍ Donnie V. Rader*



### **Ignorance Begets Ignorance**

It is very apparent that the majority of people today have very little knowledge or understanding of God's word. Since God's plan for the redemption of all men is revealed in His word we must of necessity conclude that it can be understood by all men. This being true, why then, do so many lack an understanding of God's word?

Of course, one reason why many do not have knowledge of God's word is simply because they do not put forth any effort to know His

will. It is not that they CAN NOT know, they simply WILL NOT know His will.

Also, many do not know God's word because they put their trust in men rather than studying for themselves; and after listening to some of the religious teachers one does not have to wonder why so many never learn the word of God. I once heard a preacher on a local radio station where I lived at the time speak of Lot as a "born-again Christian." Can you imagine anyone even claiming to know anything about the Bible teaching such as this? How could a man be a "born-again Christian" hundreds of years before Christ died? Jesus taught that a man is born again when he is born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). The first ones to be born again were those who obeyed the words spoken by Peter on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:36-41). The disciples were first called Christians a few years later in the city of Antioch (Acts 11:26). These facts are plainly taught in the word of God but yet a man who calls himself a preacher will get on the radio and say that Lot was a "born-again Christian." Is it any wonder that so many people know so little about what the Bible really says when they spend their time listening to such "teachers"?

*✍ James Hahn*

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<b>Schedule of Services</b>	
Sunday Bible Study . . . . .	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship . . . . .	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship . . . . .	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study . . . . .	7:00 p.m.
<b>Evangelist</b>	
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