

INSTRUMENTS AND TESTAMENTS

Text: Galatians 3:19-25.

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INTRODUCTION.

1. Recently, a question was submitted that I felt should be answered in a sermon all by itself.
2. Actually, it is almost two questions.
3. “In the Old Testament, there are hundreds of references to God being blessed and pleased by His people honoring Him with instrumental music. Did God change His mind? Aren’t the Old and New Testaments together the full counsel of God?”
4. Let us notice:
 - a. Instrumental music in the Old Testament.
 - b. Which Covenant do we live under today? New, Old, or Both?
 - c. Instrumental Music in the New Testament.
 - d. Is this a matter of faith?

BODY.

I. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. I don’t know if there are hundreds of references to instrumental music in the Old Testament, but there are certainly many.
 1. Moses commanded the use of two silver trumpets. *Numbers 10:2-10*.
 - a) However, these were not used in worship.
 - b) They were used for calling the people to worship, to announce the beginning of the month, various feasts, and to assist in the movement of the camp.
 - c) It doesn’t appear that instruments were used in the tabernacle worship.
 2. However, during the time of David, they did begin to be used.
 3. We can’t deny that instrumental music was present in the worship services of the Jewish people.
 4. *Psalms 33:2*. Praise the Lord with the harp; Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
 5. *Psalms 43:4*. Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God.
 6. *Psalms 68:24-25*. They have seen Your procession, O God, The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary. *25* The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; Among them were the maidens playing timbrels.
 7. *Psalms 98:5-6*. Sing to the Lord with the harp, With the harp and the sound of a psalm, *6* With trumpets and the sound of a horn; Shout joyfully before the Lord, the King.
 8. Some might say that God allowed these things to happen but didn’t approve of them.
- B. The clincher. *2 Chronicles 29:25-28*. And he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for **thus was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets.** *26* The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. *27* Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. *28* So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.
 1. Notice it says that these instruments were the commandment of the Lord.
 2. God wanted these instruments to be used at this time.
- C. File this information away. We will come back to it.

II. WHICH COVENANT? NEW, OLD, OR BOTH?

- A. First of all, we need to establish what we mean by “New” and “Old.”

1. What we call the Old Testament consisted of three different parts.
 - a) **Luke 24:44.** Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”
 - b) The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.
 - c) The Law of Moses is the Pentateuch. Genesis - Deuteronomy.
 - (1) It contains the early history of the world.
 - (2) The account of the development of the nation of the Jews.
 - (3) The Law of Moses.
 - (4) The account of the Exodus from Egypt.
 - d) When we talk about the Old Covenant, we are talking about the Law that was given to Moses on Sinai.
 - e) The rest of the Old Testament deals primarily with the life of the Israelites under that law.
 - f) Therefore, when we ask if we live under the Old Covenant we are asking if we live under the Law of Moses today.
 2. The New Covenant / Testament is referring to Matthew through Revelation.
 - a) These books came about 400 - 500 years after the last of the Old Testament books were written.
 - b) These books naturally divide into four categories.
 - (1) The Gospel Accounts. Matthew - John.
 - (2) History. Acts.
 - (3) Epistles. Romans - Jude.
 - (4) Prophecy. Revelation.
 - c) Together, all of these books make up the New Testament.
- B. In regard to the Law of Moses...
1. It was given to the nation of Israel. **Exodus 34:27-28.** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” **28** So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.
 - a) Gentiles were never under the Law of Moses! Even in Old Testament times.
 - b) We are gentiles, therefore, we were never under the Law of Moses.
 2. As Gentiles, we were included in God’s promise to Abraham. **Galatians 3:8.** And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”
 3. The Law of Moses came after the Abrahamic promise and did not supersede it. **Galatians 3:15-17.** Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. **16** Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. **17** And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.
 4. What, then, was the purpose of the Law of Moses? **Galatians 3:19.** What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.
 - a) The Law of Moses was added to the promise of Abraham because of transgression.
 - b) It was added TILL the Seed should come.
 - c) Verse 16 tells us that the Seed is Jesus.
 - d) He fulfilled and abolished the Law.
 - (1) **Matthew 5:17-18.** “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. **18** For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.
 - (2) **Luke 24:44.** Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”
 5. The Law served as a tutor to bring us to Christ. **Galatians 3:24-25.** Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25** But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
 6. The Jewish people were released from the Law when Jesus died on the cross.

- a) **Romans 7:1-4.** Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? **2** For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. **3** So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. **4** Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.
 - b) **Colossians 2:14.** Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
7. We live under the New Testament today.
- a) **Hebrews 8:7-13.** For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. **8** Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— **9** not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord. **10** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **11** None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. **12** For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” **13** In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.
 - b) **Hebrews 9:15.** And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
8. We are to be obedient to Jesus. **Matthew 17:5.** While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”
- C. Is the Old Testament the counsel of God?
- 1. If by “counsel of God” you mean that it came from God... then yes.
 - 2. If by “counsel of God” you mean that it is still in force today... then no.
 - 3. Not because God didn’t plan adequately but because God never intended for it to remain in effect.
- D. If the Old Testament was still in force today...
- 1. You and I would have no hope! **Ephesians 2:11-12.** Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— **12** that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
 - 2. Those desiring to keep it would be obligated to keep the whole law. **Galatians 5:1-3.** Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. **2** Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. **3** And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.
 - a) The temple would need to be rebuilt.
 - b) Animal sacrifice would need to be restarted.
 - c) We would need to rediscover the genealogical records of the Jews so we could appoint Levites to serve in the temple.
 - d) Etc...

III. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Passages which refer to music in the New Testament.
 - 1. **Romans 15:9.** And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, □ And sing to Your name.”

2. *1 Corinthians 14:15*. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.
 3. *Ephesians 5:19*. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
 4. *James 5:13*. Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.
 5. *Colossians 3:16*. 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.
 6. *Revelation 14:1-2*. Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. **2** And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.
- B. In all of the passages that apply to us today, we are told to sing.
1. The passages in Revelation don't apply to us for the same reason that the Law of Moses doesn't apply to us.
 - a) Namely, we are not in heaven!
 - b) So, even if some kind of instrument is used to praise God in heaven, it does not give us authority to do it today.
 2. So, to summarize:
 - a) There are many references to instrumental music in the Old Testament.
 - b) There are references to instrumental music in heaven.
 - c) NOWHERE is there a reference to instrumental music in the church!
 - d) A capella - means in the manner of the church.
 - e) The instrument was never part of the worship of the New Testament church.
 - f) It was not introduced until about A.D. 666 by Pope Vitalian.
 - (1) This was part of the great "Falling Away."
 - (2) *1 Timothy 4:1-3*. Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **3** forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

IV. IS THIS A MATTER OF FAITH?

- A. Is this matter something over which we should draw lines of fellowship?
1. Some ask, "Would God really condemn someone for worshiping with an instrument?"
 2. Or is this just a matter of preference?
- B. All we need to do is to look to Nadab and Abihu for an answer.
1. *Leviticus 10:1-2*. Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. **2** So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.
 - a) What did they do wrong?
 - b) They offered something to God which He had not commanded.
 - c) They lost their life for it.
 2. We have just seen what God wants from us in terms of music.
 - a) He wants us to sing to Him.
 - b) The instrument was added over 600 years later by man.
 - c) Now reflect on the words of Jesus. *Matthew 15:8-9*. "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. **9** And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." "
 3. Our worship must be in Spirit and Truth. *John 4:24*. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
- C. Yes. This is a matter of faith.