

## Singing

### I. What is the difference between a hymn and a prayer?

“Perhaps the most consistent distinguishing characteristic between prayers and hymns is that almost all hymns are sung by an entire assembly.” - *Willis, Wendell. Worship: A definitive study of the history, methods and intent of Christian Worship. p. 54*

- A. Without a doubt, singing is worship and falls under the study of the theology of worship as has already been studied in this series.
- B. Christianity is clearly not only a movement of intellect, but of heart as well.
- C. Singing is a natural expression of Human emotion.

### II. Purposes of Singing

- A. To Commemorate God and his works
  - 1. Exod 15:1-19 - The Song of the Sea
  - 2. Jud 5:1-31 - Song of Deborah and Barak
  - 3. 1 Sam 2:1-10 - Song of Hannah
    - This song also serves as an introduction to themes in Samuel and Kings
  - 4. 2 Sam 22:1-15 (Psalm 18) - Song of David
  - 5. Psalm 136 - God's acts through history
  - 6. Psalm 104; 139 - Creation
  - 7. Psalm 103 - God's character
  - 8. 1 Tim 3:16 - The work of Christ (It is debated whether this was a hymn)
  - 9. Rev 5:9-10 - Jesus work of atonement
  - 10. Rev 15:3-4 - For the Lord's character and holiness
- B. To instruct, teach and rebuke
  - 1. Deut 31:19, 30; 32:1-46 - Song of Moses
  - 2. Isa 5:1-7 - Song of the Vineyard
    - Imagery used in Mark 12:1ff
  - 3. Col 3:16 - Singing as a result of the word in you
  - 4. Jews referred to the Psalter as the Second Torah
    - a. Five fold division of the Psalter probably reflects this view
    - b. Many, many New Testament quotations of the Old from Psalms
      - Many familiar with it
      - Music aids memory
    - c. As they commemorate God's acts, they are teaching and reminding
- C. To encourage and build up one another
  - 1. Ps 145 - The Lord will save
  - 2. Psa 30 - The Lord's anger is for a moment,

3. 1 Cor 14:26 - All things are to be done for edification
- D. To express joy, praise and thanksgiving
    1. Psalm 47; 100 - Express Joy to the Lord
    2. Heb 13:15 - Offer up a sacrifice of praise
    3. James 5:13 - If cheerful, sing praises
  - E. To express sorrow, remorse, or even anger
    1. James 5:13 - Hebrew Parallelism
      - Prayer is parallel to singing, implying in this case that singing and prayer are to be the same response to either joy or sorrow
    2. Psalm 137 - Missing Zion
    3. Psalm 51 - Sorrow and repentance for sinning
    4. Lam 2 - Expression of extreme despair and sorrow
  - F. As a prayer of request
    1. Psalm 44; 64 - A prayer for deliverance
    2. Psalm 25 - Numerous requests
  - G. Thought Question: Why singing? Why not just pray and use words without melody?

### III. Results of Singing

- A. God is glorified
  1. Psalm 34:1-3
  2. Rom 15:9-11
- B. God acts
  1. 2 Chr 20:20-24 - Jehoshaphat and worship leaders
  2. Acts 16:25-26 - Paul and Silas in prison
- C. We are edified

### II. Important considerations in singing

- A. Content
  1. I Corinthians 14:15 - "with the Spirit & Mind" Content is important
    - a. We should always seek to understand what we are singing
    - b. Singing without understanding does not edify or praise God
  2. Eph 5:19 - Types of Songs

- a. Psalms (Grk: psalmos) - Old Testament word used to refer to sacred music. Most often used to refer to the collection of Psalms in the book of psalms
- b. Hymns (Grk: Humnos) - A song of praise addressed to God.
- c. Spiritual Songs (Grk: Pneumatikos) - Songs about spiritual things

#### B. Properly and Decently

- 1. 1 Chr 15:22 - Singing classes
- 2. 1 Chr 25:7 - Skilled
- 3. 1 Cor 14:40 - Worship is to be orderly to honor God

#### C. Methods

- 1. Is the method, style, music, etc. important?
- 2. Examples of God's instructions concerning how to worship and serve him:
  - a. The building of the tabernacle & system of atonement. How specific was He in giving these instructions?
  - b. Leviticus 10:1-3 - Nabad & Abihu
  - c. I Chronicles 13; 15:1-2; 16:1-3... - Transporting the Ark
  - d. Conclusion: When God specifies what to do, DO JUST THAT
- 3. Has God specified how to sing in the New Testament?
  - a. I Corinthians 14:15, 26
    - 1) "I will sing psallo with the spirit and mind"
    - 2) See John 4:24 - God seeks spiritual worshippers
  - b. Ephesians 5:19
    - 1) Leading thought - Being filled with the spirit
    - 2) Followed by five masculine imperative participles
      - a) Speaking
      - b) singing
      - c) making melody
      - d) giving thanks
      - e) being subject (submitting yourselves)
  - c. Colossians 3:16 - Similar construction to Ephesians passage
- 4. SINGING not playing was specified. Singing only was what was used by the early church. What justification was there to add it?

#### D. Mentions of Musical instruments in the New Testament:

1. Matthew 9:23 - According to custom, even the most poor should hire no less than 2 flute players and a wailer for a funeral for a wife
2. Other N.T. Passages with instrumental music mentioned: Luke 15:25 - Prodigal son; Matt 11:17; I Cor 14:7; I Cor 13:1; I Cor 15:52; Luke 2:14; .... this is not a complete list)
3. Musical instruments were widely known and used both among Jews and Greeks. HOWEVER, there is no mention of them being used in connection with Christian worship.

E. Burden of Proof on those who want to add it. Arguments in favor

1. The Bible doesn't say NOT TO use instruments
  - a. Did God say NOT TO use the strange fire in Lev. 10?
  - b. Did God say NOT TO offer animal sacrifices in the New Testament?
  - c. He did say both that the Old Law was done away with, and has specified how he wants to be worshipped in the New Testament
2. It is authorized by the Greek Word "Psallo"
  - a. Word meant to play or to sing to musical accompaniment in Classical Greek
  - b. This was what was written in Thayer's lexicon. However, more recent linguistic studies have shown that from 200-300 years before Christ, the word came to mean singing and singing only. This is acknowledged in the best and most recent Baur's lexicon.
  - c. If it did mean play, or to play and sing, then we would all have to do it.
3. It is only an aid to singing. not an addition
  - a. 2 Chronicles 29:25-28 - Old Testament Worship with instruments
  - b. Psalm 150 - Were the instruments worship, or just an aid?
  - c. Songbooks, pews, etc. are aids, not instruments

4. Instruments are mentioned in Revelation in worship
    - a. So are altars, lamps, incense etc.
    - b. Comparing Revelations to Christian worship in this manner is like comparing apples and oranges. Revelations contains apocalyptic visions, not literal representations
  5. There are no commands for congregational singing in the New Testament either
    - a. The passages in Ephesians and Colossians should be understood to refer to the assembly, though not limited to it. Some deny that this is talking about the assembly
    - b. You cannot deny that there was at least individual singing in the Assemblies (I Cor 14:15, 26)
    - c. Does this authorize the use of instruments in worship?
- F. Nearly all restoration and reformation leaders through the ages have spoken against the use of instruments in worship.