

The New Testament Church # 9

Worship of the Church 3; “Singing”

Introduction; Music has been important to man since the beginning.

A. The first specific mention of music is in Genesis 4.

1. *Gen 4:19-21 Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. 20 And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock, 21 His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute.*
2. This is in the lineage of Cain. He is the one who killed his brother and was caused to leave his family and the presence of God.
3. His family later competed with the Godly line of Seth, his younger brother. Seemingly they were more dominate and the world became so wicked that God destroyed it with a flood in Noah's day.
4. This is the first mention of **instrumental** music. Certainly there was already music in God's world. There were birds and crickets and the wind blowing.
5. Men and woman probably hummed and sang. The musical instruments were probably intended to accompany the singing or to provide a different kind of music or to imitate the birds and other animals.

B. An old Turkish Proverb says, “As the music is, so are the people of the country.”

1. There is probably a lot of truth in this proverb. The things a nation sings about shows its **character** and **inclination**.
2. If they sing love songs they **honor home and family and marriage**. If they sing patriotic songs they **respect and honor their nation**.
3. If they sing songs of praise and honor to God then they **respect and honor their Creator**.
4. If they sing songs of vice and violence and foolishness then they **have no respect and honor**. This causes us to worry some about our nation.

B. Music can be very powerful.

1. *“Music has charms to soothe the savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.”*
—William Congreve (1670-1729)
2. Music can **entertain and please** us. It can **teach and instruct** us. It can **calm and relax** some. It can also **anger** and move some to **violence and hatred**.
3. Songs can tell stories of **heroism and chivalry**. They can move us to want to be better and become better.

C. Music has always been popular among the people of God.

1. David, Asaph and many others wrote the Psalms for Israel to sing. David wrote many songs that honored God and His word before the people.
2. *2 Sam 23:1 Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse; Thus says the man raised up on high, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel:*
3. Even in the wilderness, after crossing the Red Sea Moses and Miriam wrote a song celebrating the victory over Egypt. We see **responsive singing** here.
4. *Exod 15:1-3 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! 2 The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him. 3 The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name.*
5. *Exod 15:20-21 Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them: "Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"*

D. Music is still important to the Lord's people today.

1. We want to see that we can expect to have music in heaven. So we should enjoy it here.
2. We want to see that Jesus and the early Christians sang.
3. And we want to see that singing is part of the way we worship God as His church.

E. We will consider 'singing' as the music of the church today.

I. Music is important to God's servants.

A. We have seen that music was important under the Old Covenant.

1. Under David and Solomon the worship at the tabernacle and temple was developed and organized to a great degree. They appointed certain of the Levites to sing and make the showbread and do the other needed things.
2. *1 Chron 15:16 Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.*
3. *1 King 10:12 And the king (Solomon) made steps of the almug wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such almug wood, nor has the like been seen to this day.*
4. The worship under the O.T. seemingly was very formal and professional. They had a professional choir with many kinds of instruments.
5. *Psalms 150 Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! 3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! 4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!*
6. Many churches today still employ the professional singers and music directors and have very elaborate music programs. They base this on the O.T. We will consider if this is right later.

B. Scripture also reveals music is important in heaven.

1. If we do not enjoy music on earth we will not enjoy heaven. Part of the worship around the throne of God there is singing.
2. *Rev 5:8-9 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,*
3. *Rev 15:3-4 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! 4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."*
4. *Rev 14:3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.*
5. Music is one way the citizens of heaven worship God. We recognize there is a lot of imagery and symbolism in the book of Revelation. However the imagery pictures music as part of the worship of heaven.

C. We see that music in worship is not just for this earth and age.

II. Jesus and the early Christians sang.

A. Jesus worshipped at the temple.

1. He often went to the temple in Jerusalem to worship and teach. He would have listened to the singing and musical instruments.
2. At the temple the worship and music was very professional and the people did not actively participate. In private worship Jesus and his disciples all sang a hymn praise to God together.
3. *Mark 14:24-26 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. 25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." 26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

B. The early Christians also sang.

1. Their music was not limited to the public worship assembly. They sang together and privately the songs of spiritual Zion.
2. *Acts 16:25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*
3. *James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.*
4. The writings of the early church writers is very clear. The early Christians sang often. They sang in their worship periods. But they also sang alone and with others privately.
5. "Go where you will," says Jerome, "the ploughman at his plough sings his joyful hallelujahs, the busy mower regales himself with his psalms, and the vine-dresser is singing one of the songs of David. Such are our songs — our love-songs, as they are called — the solace of the shepherd in his solitude and of the husbandman in his toil." —Jerome about AD 400.
5. Eusebius declares himself an eye-witness to the fact that, under their persecutions in Thebais, "They continued to their latest breath to sing psalms and hymns and thanksgivings to the God of heaven" —Both quotes are from the Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature by McClintock and Strong.

C. We see that music is not limited to the public assemble of the saints. We should sing often.

III. Singing is part of the public worship of God's saints today.

A. There are limits on our worship. It must be done in a certain manner.

1. The **Lord's supper** must be taken by the church as a group. It must be done on the first day of the week. It is a memorial of the death, burial and resurrection of return of Jesus Christ.
2. **Prayer** can be public and private. It should be both in the church service, the home and in society. It is not to teach nor to seek the praise of men. It is to talk to our Father in heaven.
3. The **collection** is also limited to the first day of the week. **Preaching** and **teaching** are to be limited to the word of God. Men's opinions and wisdom do not belong in the pulpit.
4. The **music** of the church also has limits. It must be a certain kind and have certain purposes. It is not to entertain or glorify men. We will consider more of the limitations of church music.

B. Christians sang in their assemblies.

1. The consistent testimony of the early church writers is that they sang when they assembled to worship. Even Jesus is quoted as saying He will sing of God in the assembly.
2. *Heb 2:11-12 For both He (Jesus Christ) who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified (Christians) are all of one (Father and God), for which reason He (Christ) is not ashamed to call them (Christians) brethren, 12 saying: "I will declare Your (God's) name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You (the Father)."*
3. This was a Psalm of David (Psa 22) and very Messianic. David praised God in the assembly of God's people. As a type of Christ he foreshadowed Jesus coming and also praising God in the assembly. This was physically in the Temple in His life and spiritually when He is present with us in our assemblies.
4. The early church sang. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was to sing a song to the church that one had not known before. This was to teach and instruct.
5. *1 Cor 14:26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*
6. *1 Cor 14:15-16 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. 16 Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?*
7. We see that folks should be **instructed** by our singing and be **encouraged**. We will see this again in our study. This is very important.

C. Lets consider the purposes of singing.

1. In Ephesians 5 we see Paul telling the church to not be filled with wine. Instead they needed to be filled with the Spirit. Wine may symbolize worldliness here and not just drunkenness. Being filled with the Spirit would be giving ourselves over to holiness and worship.
2. *Eph 5:18-20 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation (overindulgence, debauchery); but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
3. Many wonder if this is in the public assembly? I think it is because it says to 'speak to one another in ...' Our singing is to God and men. Paul tells the Colossians much the same thing.

4. Col 3:16-17 *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. 17 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.*
5. We will consider some of the teachings of these two passages. **First**, let's consider **what we sing**.
 - a. **Psalms**; This is probably the book of Psalms. We know from the early church writers they made great use of the Psalms. While some may not be appropriate for the New Covenant worship, many are and should be used.
 - b. **Hymns**; Hymns were usually songs of praise to God. Many of the Psalms were too but they were distinct in that they were already written. Hymns were new songs of praise.
 - c. **Spiritual Songs**; This would be songs in general that were spiritual or religious. Again the Psalms included many of these but these were written by the early church. Consider one example left to us...
 - d. 1 Tim 3:16 *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: "God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, "Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, "Believed on in the world, Received up in glory."*
 - e. We see that our singing is not the popular songs of the day but songs that are spiritual and honor God and Jesus Christ.
6. **Second** we will consider **who we sing to**. Certainly we sing to ourselves in that we pay attention to what we sing and are taught and encouraged. We also sing to others —and listen to others as they speak to us.
 - a. We, *"speak to one another"* in Eph 5:19, and we, *"teach and admonish one another"* in Col 3:16.
 - b. In 1 Cor 14:26 we are edifying one another and in verses 15 and 16 men are to understand what we are saying. We sing with the spirit and the understanding.
 - c. We also *"give thanks to God the Father"* in Eph 5:20. We *"sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord"* in Col 3:16. Worship is man bowing before God. We honor and reverence God in all our worship.
7. **Third** let's consider **why we sing**. We are singing to God and men. Why do we do this. We have already suggested several reasons but we will see them in more detail now.
 - a. We *"give thanks always for all things to God"* in Eph 5:20. Some of our songs are **songs of thanksgiving**. Many of the Psalms were Psalms of thanksgiving. We need to be thankful people. God has given us so many blessings, both physical and spiritual.
 - b. We are also to be *"filled with the Spirit"* in our singing (Eph 5:18) and let the *"word of Christ dwell in us"* in Col 2:16. We are to fill our minds and hearts with spiritual thoughts. They are to help us overcome the tempter.
 - c. We are to *"teach"* one another —Col 3:16. Our songs are not to be foolish and meaningless. They, like the Psalms, are to be **instructive**. They teach those who are new to the faith and reinforce those who have been Christians for a long time.
 - d. We are to *"admonish"* one another —Col 3:16. We all need to be **corrected and rebuked**. We need to be reminded of who we are and why we are gathered together to worship God. Singing is a positive way to instruct one another.
 - e. We are also to *"edify"* or build up one another —1 Cor 14:26. All we do in the public assembly is to edify one another to greater service in the kingdom of God.
8. **Fourth** and last of all we need to see **what kind of music** we offer to God.
 - a. We have seen instrumental music in the O.T. worship and perhaps in heaven. The symbolism of the book of Revelation may picture the beauty of the voices of heaven.
 - b. Every N.T. example of the church and saints is vocal music. Singing was the music of the early church for over a thousand years. Very few if any dispute this.
 - c. Eph 5:19 says to *"sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord."* Col 3:17 says to *"sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord."* The emphasis is on saints singing. It is on us worshipping God from our hearts with our own voices.
 - d. Heb 13:15 *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*
 - e. God wants the *"fruit of our lips"* in singing and prayer. New Testament worship is not professional and entertaining. It is worship in *"spirit and in truth"* —John 4:23, 24.
 - f. N.T. music is the honest and sincere voices of the saints who are intent on worshipping their God. It is not to impress men but to please God. We are not commanded to sing well but to sing from the heart. Singing is **heart worship**.
 - e. Men would prefer the professional and entertaining music of the O.T. God sees things differently. We

- need to see as God sees and not be too critical of N.T. singing by people who sing from the heart.
- f. 1 Sam 16:7 *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*
 9. Singing is important. We need to sing as the church and also as Christians.

D. We see then how important singing is in our lives and public worship.

Conclusion; We should enjoy singing to our God and Savior.

A. We should enjoy hearing the saints sing to their God and master from their hearts.

B. We become Christians by faith, repentance and baptism.

1. We must believe in Jesus Christ and trust His word enough to obey it. We then repent of our sins and turn from them and turn towards God and His way.
2. Then we are buried with Him in baptism to have our sins washed away. We are immersed in water in faith and obedience to the Lord of lords. By that faith and obedience we are reconciled to God and become Christians.
3. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
4. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
5. *Gal 3:26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

C. If we can help anyone become a child of God today, please let us.