

# HARPS IN HEAVEN?

By David Lee Burris



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*Harp of Heaven*

SD Swank 2008



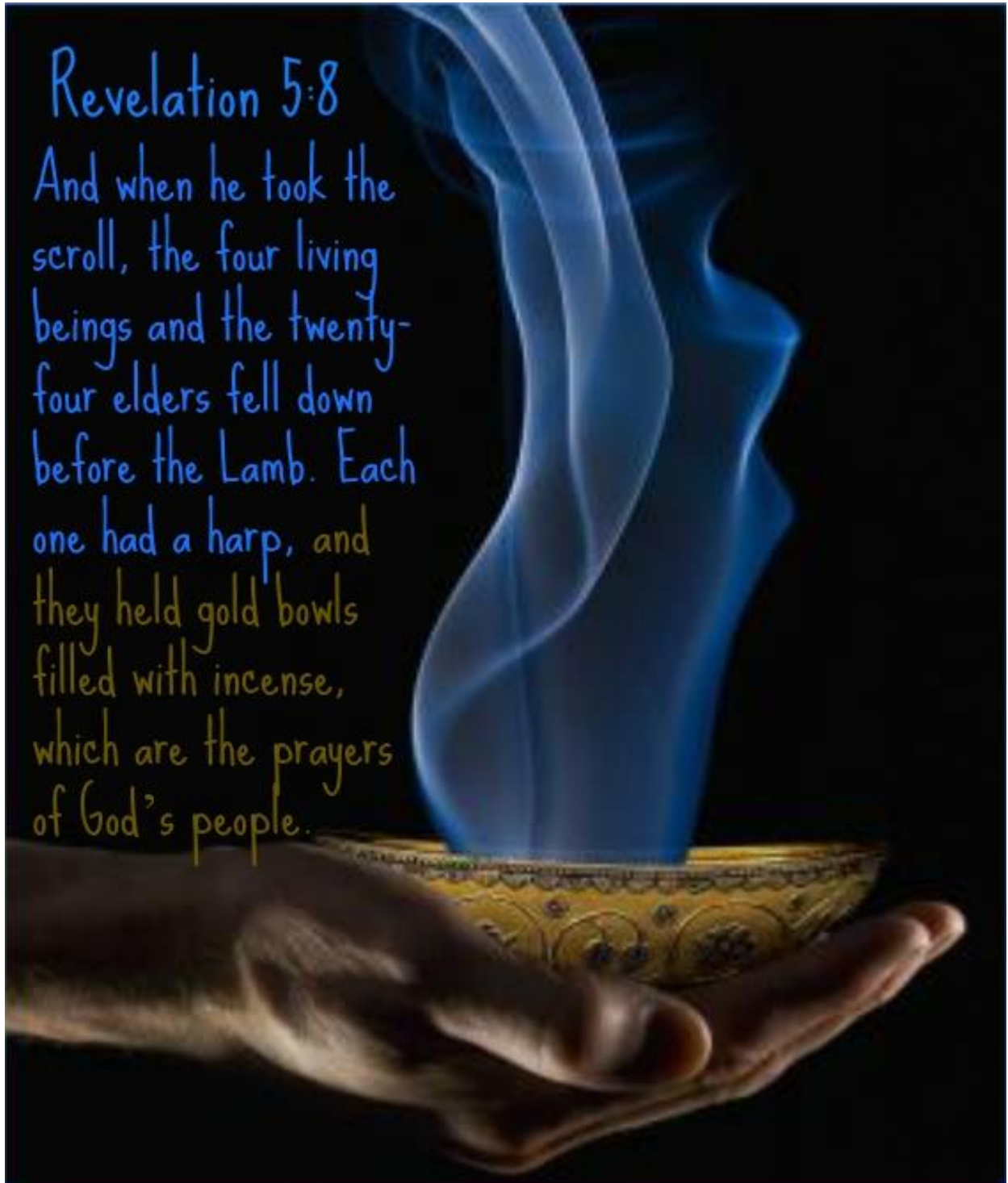
*Little Girl (to harpist). "PLEASE, ARE YOU PRACTISING FOR HEAVEN?"*

# WILL THERE BE HARPS IN HEAVEN?

Three passages in the book of Revelation mention harps ([Revelation 5:8](#); 14:2; 15:2).

## Revelation 5:8

And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people.



## This Zion is in Heaven (14:2-3)



- **Rev 14:2-3 WEB** *I heard a sound from heaven, like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of a great thunder. The sound which I heard was like that of harpists playing on their harps. (3) They sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the one hundred forty-four thousand, those who had been redeemed out of the earth.*

## Saints standing beside the sea

- **Rev 15:2-4 WEB** *I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who overcame the beast, his image, and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. (3) They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God, the Almighty! Righteous and true are your ways, you King of the nations. (4) Who wouldn't fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you only are holy. For all the nations will come and worship before you. For your righteous acts have been revealed."*



Rev. 15:2-4

I saw a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast and his image and over the number of his name, stood on the sea of glass having the harps of Yahweh.



They sang the song of Moses, the servant of Yahweh, and the song of the Lamb, singing, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord Yahweh Almighty; righteous and truth are your ways, King of the nations. Who shall not reverence you, O Yahweh, and glorify your name (character and authority)? because you only are holy; for all nations shall come and worship before you because your judgments are manifest.

67

## The Song of Moses and of the Lamb 15:1-4

"Great and amazing are your deeds,  
O Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways,  
O King of the nations!  
4 Who will not fear, O Lord,  
and glorify your name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come  
and worship you,  
for your righteous acts have been revealed."



## WILL THERE BE HARPS IN HEAVEN?

Three passages in the book of Revelation mention harps ([Revelation 5:8](#); 14:2; 15:2).

*One should remember that much of Revelation is written in figurative language. Was there a real vial full of odors which were the prayers of the saints (5:8)? Was the voice from heaven thunder or as thunder (14:2)? Was the harp real (5:8), or was it a voice (14:2) that was melodious like the music of harps? One version states plainly, "the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps" (14:2, ASV).*



## Biblical Symbolism of Heaven

The study of heaven has been a much neglected theme. When William Shedd produced his celebrated work, Dogmatic Theology, he utilized only two pages on "heaven," while consuming eighty-seven pages on "hell"! (1971, 664-754). Surely heaven is worthy of greater attention.

### Material Symbolism

What is God like as to his essence? Jesus declared that "*God is spirit*" ([John 4:24](#)), but who knows what spirit is? None of us has ever seen one. We know what spirit is not. It is not flesh, bones, or blood ([Luke 24:39](#); [Matthew 16:17](#)), i.e., physical.

In view of the inability of the human mind to fathom the "*deep things of God*" ([I Corinthians 2:10](#)), Scriptures accommodate our limitations by the use of figures of speech. One of these is called anthropomorphism ("man form"); this is describing God symbolically in human terms, e.g., eyes, ears, arms, hands ([Isaiah 53:1](#); [59:1](#); [Hebrews 4:13](#)). It is a serious error to think of God the Father literally as a physical being, as our Mormon friends do (Smith, 130:22).

Similarly, heaven is a spiritual realm. The Bible, therefore, employs a variety of figures of speech to represent the grandeur of heaven, and it is a mistake to literalize these symbols. Yet such is common among well-meaning, though misguided, students.

### Figures for Heaven

The Hebrew term samayim (heaven/s) is found 421 times in the Old Testament, and its corresponding Greek companion, ouranos, is employed 273 times in the New Testament. Both expressions are used in several different senses, in each case being defined by the context.

"Heaven" may refer to the realm of the birds ([Genesis 1:26](#); [Matthew 8:20](#)) or the region of weather phenomena ([Genesis 8:2](#); [James 5:18](#)). The term also can embrace what we call "outer space," the arena of the planets and stars ([Genesis 1:14](#); [22:17](#)).

Then there is the place where the abode of God is focused — called "*heaven*" ([Matthew 6:9](#)), the "*heaven of heavens*" ([Deuteronomy 10:14](#)), or "*the third heaven*" ([II Corinthians 12:2](#)).

There are many figures of speech that represent the heavenly sphere. Heaven is represented as a "*city*" ([Hebrews 11:10](#)) or a "*country*" ([Hebrews 11:14-16](#)). Jesus characterized it as both a "*house*" and a "*place*" ([John 14:2](#)). It may be depicted as a "*temple*" ([Isaiah 6:1](#)) or a "*throne*" ([Matthew 5:34](#)). It is called "*glory*" ([I Timothy 3:16](#)) and a "*kingdom*" ([2Timothy 4:18](#)). It is the ultimate "*holy city, the new Jerusalem*" ([Rev. 21:2](#)) and the garden-like Paradise of God ([Revelation 2:7](#)). It will be our eternal "*home*" ([II Corinthians 5:8](#)).

## The New Jerusalem

In [Revelation 21:1-22:5](#) there is a marvelous depiction of the celestial home of God's people. Symbolically it is represented as "*a new heaven & new earth, the holy city, new Jerusalem.*" It is pictured as "*coming down out of heaven*" ([Rev. 21:2](#)). The "*coming down*" is not to be viewed as a "spatial" movement (Jones 1971, 116), as evidenced by the subsequent repetition of the phrase ([Revelation 21:10](#)). There is the suggestion of something which partakes of the "heavenly" nature.

This section of Revelation falls into four principal segments:

1. its inhabitants, the redeemed ([Revelation 21:1-8](#));
2. its symbolic structure, in grandeur and scope ([Revelation 21:9-21](#));
3. its glory, safety, and sanctification ([Revelation 21:22-27](#));
4. the river of life ([Revelation 22:1-5](#)).

Let us consider these segments.

**([Revelation 21:1-8](#))** – There is a merging of several figures of speech as the image of the holy city itself gives place to its inhabitants, the victorious people of God—under the picture of a bride who has been made ready for her husband. The picture of the tabernacle appears, i.e., the dwelling place of God.



God is personally with his people and they belong to him. All of their sorrows and pains are vanquished. Trials give way to "all things new."

The eternal God provides the spiritual "water of life" that will perpetually quench the thirst of the Lord's people. The reward has not been merited, but is freely given; yet, the gift has been bestowed only to those who, by their obedient faith, have "overcome" (cf. [Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21](#)). This place and people stand in stark contrast to the vile inmates of hell.

**([Revelation 21:9-21](#))** – There is now a symbolic depiction of the city. It is heavenly in nature, blessed with the glory of God himself. The city is surrounded by a wall, great and high — reflecting the concept of absolute security. The gates are ever open ([Revelation 21:25](#)); there is no threat from without; heaven's enemies have been dealt with already ([Revelation 21:8](#)).

On the gates are written the names of the tribes of Israel and the wall is undergirded by twelve foundations upon which are the names of the twelve apostles. The number twelve likely is a figure for the full complement of the redeemed—from both Old and New Testament eras. The symbolism is clear inasmuch as there were thirteen devout apostles. Literalizing the context is inexcusable.

The heavenly "Jerusalem" is represented as vast in area (1,500 miles in each direction — width, breadth, and height). It is perfectly clear that this is not a literally restored earthly Jerusalem. Coffman has shown that if one allows 1/10th of a mile to the level for the height, that would be 15,000 levels, allowing a floor space of more than thirty-three billion square miles, "many times the total area" of our planet (1979, 484). This is another indication that heaven is not a renovated "earth." The cubed shape of the city is reminiscent of the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, which was the dwelling place of God ([Exodus 25:22; I Kings 6:20](#)). The unparalleled beauty and value of the city are portrayed by pure gold and brilliant gems.

To illustrate, the "*building of the wall was like jasper,*" even as "*pure glass*" ([Revelation 21:18](#)). The original term (*iaspis*) designates any opaque stone; it possibly refers to the diamond (Danker et al. 2000, 465). The term "building" (*endomesis* — used only here in the New Testament) can denote that which is built-in, or as we might describe it, inlaid. Here it may suggest a diamond-studded wall. As one writer noted, the "language breaks down in endeavoring to describe the radiance, the glory, the wealth, the beauty, and the magnificence of this great city" (Pack, 90).

**([Revelation 21:22-27](#))** – Both the Father and the Son become the divine sanctuary in this segment. Jesus also is represented as "the Lamb," referring, of course to his sacrifice for sin ([John 1:29](#)). The inseparable connection between the Father and the Lamb is clear testimony of the deity of the Son. Such is a strong indictment of cultists like the "Watchtower" devotees, who claim that Christ was "nothing more than a perfect man" (Let God Be True 1946, 87).

In this wondrous realm there is no "night," hence no need for artificial illumination—or even the sun—for the splendor of heaven is that of the glory of God and the Lamb ([Revelation 22:5](#)). This is another clue that this is not a renewed material universe. Mention of the "nations" ([Revelation 21:24, 26](#)) reveals that the population is international in composition (cf. [Revelation 7:9](#)).

The sustained purity of heaven is emphasized by the fact that nothing unclean will ever enter the sacred domain (cf. [Revelation 22:15](#)). Those who glory in their carnality should take careful note. Furthermore, heaven is reserved only for those whose names are written (perfect tense, "permanently written," [[Rev. 21:27b](#)]) in the Lamb's book of life. These are they who, by obedience to Christ, entered his spiritual body ([I Corinthians 12:13](#); [Galatians 3:26-27](#)), the church ([Colossians 1:18, 24](#)), hence have been "enrolled" in heaven ([Hebrews 12:23](#)).

**(Revelation 22:1-5)** – There is a connection between the books of Genesis and Revelation. Things that went wrong at the commencement of human history, as revealed in Genesis, are shown now to be rectified in the eternal order of heavenly things. God's great plan has never failed in spite of the multitudes that are lost ([Matthew 7:13-14](#); [22:14](#)).

This section on heaven concludes with a discussion of the "river" of the "water of life," i.e., in the imagery, it is that which sustains life eternal (cf. [John 4:13-14](#)). The water issues from God's throne, a suggestion of divine authority. It is not that which man could initiate for himself.

All needs of the saints are provided — water to quench thirst, food from the tree of life to sustain, and perpetual health from the leaves of the tree of life. We must ever remind ourselves that these are spiritual symbols, for there is neither sickness nor death in heaven. Note that the "nations" stand healed. The nations that once made war with the Lamb have been conquered by his love (Roberts, 193).

The curse imposed in Eden has been removed forever. Those who have the Lamb's "name" on their forehead — a symbol of identification, perhaps suggesting also their mental assent to his teaching — bask in the radiance of his face and rejoice in serving him evermore. (For comments on the balance of this chapter, see Jackson, 223ff.)

The materialistic approach of many with regard to heaven — with its supposed literal buildings, streets, physical bodies, marriages, animals, etc. — that has consumed the sectarian community and is making in-roads in the church, is disturbing. It cannot but make one wonder how some people could ever expect to enjoy heaven once they are confronted with the reality that there will be no shopping malls, golf courses, fishing streams, or hunting seasons. No Monday Night Football or the legion of other material pursuits that utterly consume the attention of far too many professing disciples of the Lord. When baseball is thrilling, yet Bible study, prayer, and worship services are dull, the biblical heaven is lightyears from the heart.

# La Vista Church of Christ

## Question:

If the New Testament forbids the use of musical instruments in the worship service, why are there musical instruments in the Book of Revelation?

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## Answer:

Before answering your question, let's get a bit more precision. The New Testament does not forbid the use of instrumental music in worship; that is, there is no direct nor any indirect statement saying the instruments were not to be used in worship. The problem is that there is no authorization to use instrumental music in the New Testament. Such authorization was given to the Israelites under the law of Moses (see Psalm 150 as an example), but the complete lack of it in the New Testament is noticeable. Since Christians are not allowed to modify the law of Christ ([Galatians 1:6-9](#)), we cannot assume approval for something when none is given.

## **I believe you are referring to one of the following verses from Revelation:**

*"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" ([Revelation 5:8](#)).*

*"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" ([Revelation 14:2](#)).*

*"And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God" ([Revelation 15:2](#)).*

The book of Revelation is written in symbols. The harps represent something, just as the bowls of incense, the beast, the mark, and the sea of glass all have symbolic meaning. Because a symbol is used, it is a mistake to assume that it physically exists. In other words, just because someone is referred to as a beast, it doesn't mean that there was a physical person with shaggy hair and long sharp teeth.

In the Old Testament, instruments were used to praise God and thus the use of instruments in Revelation is a picture of praise being given to God. You can see this reinforced in the verse following each quotation above.

Even if we assigned a literal meaning to the use of harps in heaven (why there would be physical instruments in a spiritual realm, I do not know -- notice that these are harps of God, not of earth), it does not then imply authorization for the use of harps in worship here on earth. Notice that incense was being burned in these images as well. Does this mean that the church is thus authorized to burn incense here on earth? Most would understand the answer is "no." We cannot reach back into the Old Law to authorize practices under the law of Christ. Neither can we reach forward to another realm to authorize things done during the Christian age on earth. Our covenant was given and confirmed. We cannot alter the terms.

Even if you ignored all of the above, notice that music wasn't being played to the multitude, but that each person in the multitude is playing. If you want to justify instrumental music by these verses, you need to give everyone in the assembly a harp to play. It would not be an option, but a requirement that everyone play a harp.

# Will there be instrumental music in heaven?

By [Musa Netshivhambe](#) 06/09/2011 14:54:00

[Revelation 5:8](#) and other passages in the book of Revelation talk about there being harps in heaven. If there are instruments of music in heaven, why can we not use them here on the earth in worship to God?

Frequently those who defend the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church appeal to the book of Revelation for justification of their worship practices. The following passages are cited and the instrument devotee will then say, "See, there are instruments used in worship to God in heaven. Therefore, one may use instruments in worship to God on earth." The passages are:

[Revelation 5:8](#) And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

[Revelation 14:2](#) And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

[Revelation 15:2](#) And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

**The argument stated in classical form would be as follows:**

***Major Premise:*** Anything that is permitted in worship in heaven is permitted in worship on earth in the church.

***Minor Premise:*** Instruments of music are permitted in worship in heaven.

***Conclusion:*** Instruments of music are permitted in worship on earth in the church.

The first thing that ought to be noted is that the major premise of the argument itself is flawed. The major premise of the argument is that anything that is to be permitted in worship in heaven is permitted in worship on earth. We ought to note that in the same context of [Revelation 5:8](#) John speaks of golden vials full of incense. Are we thus allowed to burn incense in worship to God? According to the argument set forth by those who believe in instrumental music, we are. But where, other than in the highly symbolic book of Revelation, do we find in the New Testament the church offering incense in worship to God? We don't. There is simply no authority for it.

The second thing that ought to be noted is that the minor premise of the argument is flawed. The assumption that instruments of music are permitted in worship in heaven is suspect because of the highly figurative context of the book of Revelation. In fact, in [Revelation 5:8](#) John explains that the golden vials full of incense are in fact symbolic of the prayers of the saints. Why would instruments of music not be symbolic of the songs of the saints and not the literal instrument itself. Given the context, that ought to be the conclusion one should draw. In addition, it ought to be questioned whether or not these allegedly literal harps are literally in heaven as physical things. Heaven is a spiritual place ( [1 Corinthians 15:42-50](#)), not a physical one and we know that all material things on the earth are going to be burned up at the end of time ( [2 Peter 3:10](#)), but those who argue for the instrument must say, "They will all be burned up, EXCEPT for instruments of music! They will be preserved so that we may worship with them in heaven!" The very idea that in heaven, a spiritual place, we will be reduced to worshipping God with physical harps of wood and string is contradictory to everything the Bible teaches about the spiritual nature of heaven (see [2 Corinthians 4:18](#) and [2 Corinthians 5:1](#)).

Finally, it is often overlooked by those arguing that in [Revelation 14:2](#) John doesn't hear harpers, he hears the sound of harpers. The ASV translates the verse as follows: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps:" The ESV translates it like this: "And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps."

**This passage gives no support to the USE of instruments of music in worship whatsoever. The Greek clearly includes the word ος, which means that the description of harpers harping with their harps is a simile to describe the sound that John heard. Just as the sound he heard was AS the voice of many waters and was AS the voice of great thunder, so also it was AS the voice of harpers harping with their harps. The figure of the water emphasizes the unity of what John heard; the figure of the thunder emphasizes the volume of what John heard, and the figure of the harps emphasizes the beauty of what John heard. But the fact of the matter is that what John heard was singing! That is what verse 3 tells us plainly; “and they sing as it were a new song before the throne...” Those who argue for the use of instruments of music in the worship of the church based upon these passages do nothing but show their biblical ignorance of God’s word. The book of Revelation is stated at the outset to be a book of things that were put in signs, or signified ( [Revelation 1:1](#)). To use such signs literally completely ignores the context of the book.**

**The real question that needs to be answered from those who defend the instrument is where, in the New Testament, is it authorized? There is not one single passage of New Testament scripture that authorizes the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church, and that is the bottom line. – *Church of Christ Articles***



## **Instruments Of Music In Heaven**

Jon Quinn  
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In the quest to discover some inkling of Biblical authority for the employment of musical instruments in the worship of the Lord's church, proponents have searched high and low. Finding no scriptural authority for such in this age and realm, their search takes them beyond the boundaries of this earth to that place we know only by faith and not yet by sight. In this lesson, we shall consider John's inspired account of the vision he saw and its use (or misuse) today in the vain attempt to justify the innovation of mechanical instruments of music into the worship of the church of Christ.

### **The Book Of Revelation**

The attempt to find authority for the playing of instruments in worship by citing their use in heaven leads one to the book of Christ's Revelation to John. John had been exiled to the island of Patmos (1:9). The year was 96 A.D., during the reign of the cruel tyrant Domitian. Christians were being severely persecuted because they were refusing to worship the emperor-god. The book of Revelation is God's encouragement to His persecuted people; if they continue to live by faith that they will ultimately triumph. The message rings forth that despite all earthly appearances, God is still in control of His universe (He is still on His throne). John employs brilliant imagery and figures to communicate unto us the glories which he witnesses. How inadequate human speech must be to reveal the true grandeur of heaven! And yet, how impressed we are as we glimpse its beauty through the words John employs.

In John's description of the events taking place around God's throne, he mentions four awe-inspiring creatures as well as twenty-four elders who fall down before the Lamb of God. Each has a harp as well as golden bowls of incense, which John explains represents the prayers of the saints (5:8). Also mentioned are those who have triumphed over the beast. They are represented as standing on the sea of glass holding harps of God (15:2). The message: God knows about the trials being faced for His people and eternal victory awaits those who endure. This is the central purpose of the Book of Revelation.

Now then, the question isn't whether musical instruments are mentioned in John's description of his vision - they are indeed. Nor is it a question as to whether or not these instruments are literal. I am persuaded that the crowns of gold, sea of glass, bowls of incense and the harps represent other things. We have already seen that the incense represents the prayers of the saints. Also, we see in 14:2 a voice from heaven "as the voice of many waters." Not a voice of many waters literally, but as many waters. Also mentioned is the voice of many "harpers harping upon their harps" which represent the praise offered by these heavenly beings. Certainly, the harps do not represent pianos and organs used in worship on earth! But literal or not, that is not what is at issue.

The question is whether mechanical instruments of music are authorized in the worship of the church on earth. That is precisely what is at issue here.

## **Brief Course In Bible Study**

When considering any Bible passage, it is good hermeneutical practice to ask oneself several questions: Who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? What are the circumstances? How does it apply?

For example, after the flood, Noah built an altar and offered a lamb on it. God was pleased with Noah's worship because he was worshipping as he had been authorized. But what God approved of in Noah, He does not necessarily approve of in us. Noah lived in another time and under another system. God would not accept such an offering on our part because He has not authorized the church to worship Him in such a manner. It would be an abuse of scripture to attempt to justify burnt offerings today on the basis of what God accepted under other circumstances.

In the book of Revelation, we find heavenly, not earthly, creatures worshipping God. The twenty-four elders are not only pictured as having harps, but also wearing crowns (4:10) & offering incense (5:8). We also find the use of a censer (8:5), tabernacle (15:5) and the sea of glass (15:2).

If those who attempt to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music because of their mention in John's vision were at all consistent, then they would also be insisting upon these other items. In fact, if the harps are authorized, then all are, and we have not the right to omit any of them from our worship!

## **Authority In Heavenly Visions?**

Our standard of authority must be God's word. We must obey the scripture's commands, examples, and those things which we necessarily infer when they apply to the church. The mere fact that proponents of instrumental music have had to leave behind God's instructions for the church on earth and search in a heavenly vision for authorization of their innovation makes it evident that they are having a difficult time justifying it in a reasonable way.

The argument for the use of musical instruments in worship based on the book of Revelation is stated in several different ways:

"The only example in the New Testament of a member of the church seeing and hearing singing on the Lord's day involved an instrument." This argument leaves out some important information that is relevant to the conclusion being drawn. It leaves out the fact that what John saw did not involve an assembly of saints on earth at all. Besides, what John saw and heard is not, nor ever has been, the cause of division. The issue still is whether the church is authorized to use musical instruments in worship.

"Harps are in heaven; God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven; therefore, musical instruments are authorized for the church (Matthew 6:10)." Infants are also in heaven. Shall we baptize them into the Lord's body? It is the old case of mixing apples and oranges. God's will for His heavenly creatures is not the same as His will for His children on earth. Also, the meaning of Matthew 6:10 is distorted by this argument. This verse tells us that we on earth should obey God's will even as angelic creatures obey Him in heaven.

"Instruments should be used because they are used in heaven and the church sits in heavenly places with Christ (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6)." Of course, "heavenly places" does not refer to the eternal place of reward but to the spiritual nature of the church. It is a divine, blood-bought institution. Heaven is God's throne and the earth is His footstool, It has been given a plan to follow and this plan does not include what heavenly creatures may or may not practice.

The fact of the matter is that these scenes of heavenly worship are clothed in highly symbolic language. They were intended to encourage faithfulness on the part of persecuted Christians, not to instruct them how to worship God.

## Some Final Thoughts

**Our God is a jealous God and we must approach Him as He has ordained (Heb. 10:28-29). The book of Revelation says absolutely nothing about the New Testament church worshipping God with musical instruments. To add "worship of the church" to the harp passages is to add to "the words of the prophecy of this book" and, therefore, falls under the condemnation of Revelation 22:18.**

**Will There Be Literal  
Harps In Heaven? NO!**

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## Sing W/ Instrument Accompany:

### Campbell Concert W/ Cowbell?

- Fact: Early Church Fathers Comments Condemn
- Fact: (666 AD) First Organ One Catholic Church
- Fact: Erasmus (Desiderius) - “Theatrical Music”
- Fact: Thomas Aquinas “ ...not seem to Judaize.”
- **Fact: Martin Luther – “...an ensign of Baal.”**

“Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, & the restoration of the other shadows of the law... Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to Him.” **Calvin**

# Is Mechanical Praise for God Scriptural?

## IS MECHANICAL MUSIC JUSTIFIED

- ✦ A COMMAND? — NO!
- ✦ AN EXAMPLE? — NO!
- ✦ BY INFERENCE? — NO!
- ✦ IS IT SCRIPTURAL? — NO!
- ✦ A GOOD WORK? — NO!
- ✦ PERTAIN TO LIFE? — NO!
- ✦ ANTI-SCRIPTURAL? — YES!



## THE SCRIPTURES TEACH US TO SING IN WORSHIP!

- Matthew 26:30 - "SUNG an hymn"  
Acts 16:25 - "SANG praises"  
Romans 15:9 - "SING unto Your name"  
1 Cor. 14:15 - SING with the Spirit and understanding  
Ephesians 5:19 - "SINGING psalms, hymns and spiritual songs"  
Colossians 3:16 - "SINGING with grace in your hearts"  
Hebrews 2:12 - "In the midst of the church will I SING praise"  
James 5:13 - "Is any merry? Let him SING psalms"



## MECHANICAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP IS SINFUL!

- VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH
- MAKES VOID THE WORD OF GOD
- VIOLATES GOD'S SPECIFIC COMMAND
- REJECTS CHRIST'S AUTHORITY
- CANNOT BE FOUND IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST



## Scripture Commands

## INSTRUMENT

Ephesians 5: 19  
"Speak In Song"

**CANNOT**

Colossians 3: 16  
"Teach In Song"

**CANNOT**

Colossians 3: 16  
"Admonish In Song"

**CANNOT**

1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 14: 15  
"Sing Understanding"

**CANNOT**

Hebrews 2: 12  
"Praise God"

**CANNOT**

Hebrews 13: 15  
"Give Thanks"

**CANNOT**

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

## SING

## PLAY

- Matthew 26: 30

YES

NO!

- Acts 16: 25

YES

NO!

- Romans 15: 9

YES

NO!

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15: 15

YES

NO!

- Ephesians 5: 19

YES

NO!

- Colossians 3: 16

YES

NO!

- Hebrews 2: 12

YES

NO!

- Hebrews 13: 15

YES

NO!

- James 5: 13

YES

NO!

- Revelation 5: 2, 3, 8, 9

YES

NO!

- Revelation 14: 2 - 3

YES

NO!

