



More Comments on Instrumental Music in Worship



"We render our hymn with a living *psalterion* and a living *kithara*, with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety, we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms." —**Eusebius** (church historian/bishop, Palestine), *Commentary on Psalm 91* (4th century).

"Simply singing is not agreeable to children, but singing with lifeless instruments and with dancing and clapping; on which account the use of this kind of instruments and of others agreeable to children is removed from the songs in the churches, and there is left remaining simply singing." —**Theodoret** (bishop, Syria), *Questions and Answers to the Orthodox* (5th century).

"We have brought into our churches a certain operose and theatrical music...as I hardly think was ever heard in any of the Grecian or Roman theatres. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them.... Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled." —**Erasmus** (classical scholar and humanist), *In Novum Testamentum... Annotationes* (1522).

"Tho' instrumental musick were admitted and appointed in the worship of God under the *Old Testament*, yet we do not find it practised in the *synagogue* of the Jews, but only in the *temple* ...it seems therein too much to *Judaize*; which to do is a part of the Anti-Christian apostacy...Instrumental musick in the worship of God is but a very late invention and corruption in the church of the *New Testament*. ...If we admit instrumental musick in the worship of God, how can we resist the imposition of all the *instruments* used among the ancient Jews?—yea, *dancing* as well as *playing*, and several other *Judaic* actions? ...whereof our Lord Jesus Christ hath left us no manner of direction?" —**Cotton Mather** (minister, New England Puritan), *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702).



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Olsen Park Church of Christ

4700 Andrews Avenue Amarillo, Texas 79106
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Vol. X, No. 30

July 27, 2008

Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

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Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
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“Lovers of Pleasure Rather Than Lovers of God”

Paul warned Timothy in II Timothy 3:1-5 of the “perilous times” that would come upon the earth. In his list of some of the horrible traits that would characterize the people of these times he speaks of those who are—“lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (vs. 4 NKJV). The word used in Scripture for “pleasure” is the Greek word *hedone* (ἡδονή) from which we derive our word “hedonism,” defined as - “The doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the highest good” (*The New Century Dictionary*, p. 729).

In our time we have many who might be thought of as “hedonists” (that is “lovers of pleasure”). There are...

- ☞ **The Sexually Immoral;** who disregard God’s instruction about the proper use of our bodies in favor of sexual pleasure.
- ☞ **Pornographers;** lusting after the immorality of others.
- ☞ **Drunkards;** who thrive on the pleasure of intoxication in spite of God’s prohibitions.
- ☞ **Drug Adicts;** violating human and divine law to satisfy their hunger for a “high.”
- ☞ **Unscriptural Divorcees;** who for the sake of their own personal pleasure sacrifice their families.
- ☞ **“Dead Beat” Parents;** pursuing their own interests without providing for the needs of their families and children.

☞ **Abortionists;** murdering their own children because of inconvenience.

☞ **Gamblers;** risking their livelihood for that chance to “hit it big.”

☞ **The Riotous;** allowing themselves to be caught up in the revelry of a moment regardless of the damage brought on others.

☞ **The Greedy;** seeking to use the things of this life only for their own enjoyment while ignoring opportunities to help others.

☞ **Materialists;** devoting all of their attention to piling up more and more goods on earth, while neglecting spiritual riches.

☞ **Denominationalists;** intent upon satisfying their personal desires regarding how the church should function.

☞ **Unfaithful Christians;** more zealous for a relaxing weekend than service to God.

The real irony is that those who reject God's commandments pursue a path that will rob them of pleasure eternally.

The real irony of all this is that although each of these types of people choose to reject God's instruction in favor of the pursuit of pleasure, the path they choose is actually one which will rob them of pleasure.

Notice a few of the descriptions given to us of the eternal fate of those who reject God's word:

- They will receive “**everlasting punishment**” (Matthew 25:46), being “**punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord**” (II Thessalonians 1:9).
- They will suffer “**the vengeance of eternal fire**” (Jude 7) while in “**the blackness of darkness forever**” (Jude 13).
- This will be a place of “**weeping and gnashing of teeth**” (Luke 13:28) where the “**worm does not die and the fire is not quenched**” (Mark 9:48).
- There they will “**have no rest day or night**” (Revelation 14:11), but “**be tormented with fire and brimstone**” (Revelation 14:10) and “**the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever**” (Revelation 14:11).

Why would anyone choose a moment of pleasure for an eternity of anguish?

If there is one thing that is abundantly clear about this horrible place, it is that it will be a place of no pleasure whatsoever!

On the other hand we might notice some descriptions of the eternal fate of the those who heed God's word:

- They will receive “**eternal life**” (Matthew 25:46) and the All-Mighty will “ **dwell with them, and they shall be His people and God Himself will be with them**” (Revelation 21:3).
- In this new place they will behold the glory of God and Christ will be their light (Revelation 21:23). “**There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain**” (Revelation 21:4). In fact “**God**

will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:4) and Christ will “**lead them to living fountains of waters**” (Revelation 7:17).

- God's people will enjoy “**glory, honor and peace**” (Romans 2:10) as they “**rest from their labors**” (Revelation 14:13). “**They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat**” (Revelation 7:16). “**And they shall reign forever and ever**” (Revelation 22:5).

If there is one thing that is equally clear about this place, it is that this will be a place of eternal joy and pleasure!

“*Why would anyone choose a moment of pleasure for an eternity of anguish?*” Because we are so very short sighted! We are like little children who will give every dime we have for one bag of cotton candy now, rather than saving our money to buy several bags in the future. Moses was praised as one who rejected “**the passing pleasures of sin**” (Hebrews 11:25) that he might serve God. May we do the same.

By Kyle Pope