

Authorized Melodies in Worship

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Introduction

1. We do not belong to ourselves; we were bought with a price (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
2. Our task as Christians is to follow Christ, to be obedient to His will in every aspect of our lives.
3. "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17).
4. "By what power or by what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7). To act in someone's name is to act by his authority.

I. The Music God Authorizes

- A. It is vocal in nature, requiring speech, thought and emotion.
 1. "Speaking to yourselves...singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).
 2. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col. 3:16).
 3. "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (Heb. 13:15).
- B. It is corporate in nature: "yourselves," "one another," "let us."
 1. The plural pronoun "yourselves" or "one another" used in Ephesians 5:19 is reflexive, used reciprocally. The subject of the action is also the object of the action of the verb. The "speaking to one another" is from each and to all the others. Since most versions translate the term "one another," this reflexive pronoun is used reciprocally to indicate an exchange between two or more groups.
 2. Speaking, teaching and admonishing require speakers and listeners. These verses speak about functions of groups, where pluralities are present. Singing is mutually edifying.

II. God Has Never Accepted Presumptuous Additions or Alternatives

- A. King Ahaz with Urijah's assistance brought a replica of a pagan altar into the temple to be used in addition to God's bronze altar (2 Kgs. 16:10-16); but Hezekiah cleansed the temple and restored the altar of burnt offering (2 Chron. 29:15-19). It is right to rid ourselves of what is unclean and restore what God desires.
- B. The false prophets spoke presumptuously (Jer. 23:16-17).
- C. God has never accepted worship that is "self-made" (Col. 2:20-23).

III. Some Problems

- A. The confusion over the word "*psallo*" has led many to believe instruments are permitted.
 1. *Psallo* originally meant to pluck a bowstring, then to play, and in time to sing praise
 2. *Psallo* is used figuratively in Ephesians 5:19 to make melody on or with the heart.
 3. *Psallo*, when used in the absolute sense in the Septuagint, means to "sing praise."
 4. *Psallo* in the New Testament takes its primary meaning from its use in the synagogue—to sing without accompaniment
- B. The "Christian" music industry has turned musical worship into an entertainment venue.
 1. Soloists, applause and microphones have replaced the "one another" teaching.
 2. Instead of worshiping the Lord, people are displaying their righteousness (Matt. 6:1-18).
- C. Worship teams are the "church of Christ" choirs.
 1. They take the focus off of God and onto themselves.
 2. Worship teams are exclusive rather than inclusive.
 3. In the end, congregations begin to worship through the worship teams not for themselves.

Conclusion

1. The Lord's way is the way of righteousness and the way that edifies the most.
2. If we think God permits us to substitute or add to the worship, we deceive ourselves.