

*From Where I Sit . . .*

## ***“Is It Really Such A Big Deal” – Part Two***

Last week we looked at a very disturbing trend within churches of Christ in which well-intended brethren are now advocating either the use of instruments during our worship, or at least that we not break fellowship with those who choose to use them. If God has a message on this subject that relates to the church then we must search it out. If the subject is only a matter of opinion and human tradition, then we are not free to bind on others our views. If it's a matter of doctrinal significance, we must be consistent with the doctrine of Christ whether everyone else is or not. Please go back and re-read the article from last week's edition of the Broad Street Banner as a prelude to what we now study.

There are several areas that have to be looked at in determining what is Biblically approved for the church. First and foremost is the summary statement that we need Bible authority for how we worship God. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for replacing the teachings of God with the doctrines of men. **Matthew 15:6b-9** “*....Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*”

We are not permitted to add to or subtract from the Word of God according to **Numbers 24:13; Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18, 19; II John 9**. Our main reasons then for opposing the use of instruments of music in worship begin here. First, the New Testament is conspicuously silent on this addition whereas in the Old Testament elaborate teaching was set forth on the proper use of instruments in Temple worship. They are even used to describe symbolically the heavenly joy of worship. Yet, for some strange reason, not only does the New Testament not mention their use in the church, but church history confirms that the New Testament church did not use them.

Singing was a very important part of the life within the New Testament church. From **Acts 16:25** where Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God from a Philippian jail to Paul's admonitions in **Ephesians 5:19** and **Colossians 3:16**, Christians are taught to use Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, “*singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord.*” We are not merely told to make music unto the Lord, but in fact we are instructed as to the kind of music to make – the music of the heart as songs come from our lips.

While Jewish worship was very ceremonial and outward in performance, New Testament worship is described in **John 4:24** as being “*in spirit and in truth.*” Paul tells us in **I Corinthians 14:15**, “*What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*”

There's a very interesting point made by Paul at Mars Hill in Athens while discussing the “unknown God” that the idolaters were ignorantly worshipping. Paul tells us in **Acts 17:24-25**, “*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.*”

New Testament worship was of the heart and of the spirit as opposed to the creative talents of man, whether by dance, art, or instruments invented by man. These cannot worship God and constitute an addition to what He has placed within His church.

**. . . Terry Broome**

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