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United Church of God, *an International Association*



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# Music in the Bible

## *Doctrinal Study Paper*

*Approved by the Council of Elders  
December 2003*

All scriptures are quoted from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version* (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee) unless otherwise noted.

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**M**usic is an important part of the worship services of the United Church of God, *an International Association*. Different opinions exist regarding music because it is such a subjective topic. Most of these divergent and controversial opinions revolve around the question of what kind of music is appropriate for worshipping God. The only way to answer this question is to turn to God's Word, the Holy Scriptures.

A task force was created to study the subject of music in the Scriptures, to lay the proper foundation for answering questions and to prepare the way for the production of a new hymnal for the United Church of God. The material that follows is the result of that research.

## Overview and Purpose of Music

Music is an important part of life. From joy and celebration to sadness and mourning, many deep emotional experiences have been expressed musically throughout history. Because of its nature and capacity to communicate feelings and emotions, music is often able to convey what is inexpressible in words alone.

God's Word instructs us to express our praise and to worship Him with singing, instruments and dancing (1 Chronicles 6:31; Psalm 105:2; Psalms 138, 149, 150; Ephesians 5:19). We should not underestimate the significance of music as a vital part of church services.

From the early days of our history music has played an important role, even though at times, it has been controversial. Members have always had strong individual and differing musical tastes and preferences, which has made it difficult to define and reach agreement about what is most appropriate for church services, and establish a standard that is both godly and acceptable to everyone. Most people know what they enjoy when they hear it, but to define appropriate music for services has always been a challenging proposition. But there is one principle upon which we must build our presentation. Music that was used in worshipping God was for that purpose—to worship and praise God. It was not just for entertainment. There is nothing wrong with music and singing as entertainment, but in the context of worship there is a difference. This doesn't mean that our music cannot be entertaining, but if that is our goal—to entertain ourselves—then we have missed a significant point in the overall concept of music during church services.

The central purpose of music in our church services is to praise and worship our great God. Hebrews 2:12 quotes David's Psalm 22 stating, "I will declare your name to my brothers; *in the presence of the congregation* I will sing your praises" (NIV). In Psalm 22:25 we are told, "My praise shall be of You *in the great assembly*; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him."

When David placed the ark in the tabernacle that he had erected in Jerusalem for that purpose, he instructed Israel to "sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! . . . Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day . . . Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!" (1 Chronicles 16:9, 23, 29). David also wrote, "Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of

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holiness” (Psalm 29:2). These verses certainly confirm the importance of music and singing within the context of worshipping God.

Music in the Church is important for the purpose of inspiration, encouragement and instruction. Psalm 40:3 shows that musical expressions of our faith can inspire others: “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. *Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD*” (NIV). The significance of music was also evident in the last hours of Jesus’ life. He sang a hymn with His disciples before the agonizing death He was about to suffer (Matthew 26:30).

It is also interesting to note that music can play a part in teaching and preaching the gospel. In Colossians 3:16 we are instructed, “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.” Not only can music teach the great stories of the Bible, but it can also instruct, remind and warn (Romans 15:9; Exodus 15:1).

Music can support our faith by helping to comfort and reassure us in times of trial. When Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned, they were strengthened by both prayers and singing (Acts 16:25). Perhaps their songs and prayers played a part in bringing the Philippian jailer to ask in verse 30, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Music even has a part to play in our fellowship. Ephesians 5:18-20 states, “Be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (NRSV). Music can be a part of our spiritual conversations by comforting, encouraging and motivating even when exact scripture and verse do not come to mind. Few things can bring to mind God’s teaching more than an inspiring song.

These scriptures along with many others teach the important principle that worshipful singing and praise should be done in a manner and style that illustrates and conveys the concept of holiness, that is, the lovely, righteous attitude and spirit of God Himself. This principle must form the basis for music in order for it to properly honor and praise God.

Jesus amplified this principle in John 4:23-24 by stating: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Therefore, if a musical style brings the worshipper back into the spirit and associations of the world, it is not fulfilling a godly purpose and is not appropriate for worship. The apostle John instructed, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). As Christians we must always be careful when selecting music not to cater to the world or the world’s entertainment, but to select material that fits within the context of worshipping and praising God.

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Music in our services must be used to promote a relationship with God. It is for praise, worship and inspiration. Worldliness and false religion can easily enter our services under the guise of music if we are not diligent in selecting appropriate music and finding those who can perform that music in an appropriate manner. We must not be like the world, even though we continue to live in the world. As our society (and its churches) moves further away from the purity of worshipping God, this will be one of the greatest challenges facing the Church.

### What Is Proper Music in Church?

What kind of music honors God? Should we only sing words from the Psalms in church? Is only “classical” music appropriate? Are songs with lyrics not directly quoted from the Bible suitable? These are questions that must be considered. We have already seen that a godly spirit of holiness must pervade the services.

Unfortunately, we don’t exactly know what the music described in the Bible may have sounded like—we have not heard the angels’ songs praising God and we don’t have any preserved recordings of the psalms from David’s time. However, it is significant that God’s Word validates *a variety of musical expression* from simple solo singing (James 5:13) to voices with large, loud orchestras playing “with all their might” (2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 13:8; 2 Chronicles 30:21), to choirs accompanied by musical instruments (2 Chronicles 30:21), to group singing by the brethren (Matthew 26:30; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

It would be an error to believe that music does not have an effect upon its listeners. We simply have to decide what effect we are looking for when it comes to music in the Church. Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi emphasizes this point in his book titled *The Christian and Rock Music: A Study on Biblical Principles of Music*.

“‘What rules the heart, forms the art.’ Stefani shows with compelling logic that musical styles are not neutral, but value-laden. ‘They are veritable embodiments of beliefs.’

“The non-neutrality of music is clearly recognized by musicians themselves. For example, Howard Hanson, famous composer and former head of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, said: ‘Music is made up of many ingredients and, according to the proportion of these components, it can be soothing or invigorating, ennobling, or vulgarizing, philosophical or orgiastic. It has the power for evil as well as good.’”<sup>1</sup>

The Bible nowhere indicates that there is only one type of music that is appropriate for the Church. New songs and hymns with fresh melodies, harmonies, rhythms and lyrics are appropriate in the worship of our God who makes all things new (Revelation 21:5), provided that they are in keeping with God’s spirit of holiness. If we limit our songs and hymns to only one type of music, we are more restrictive than the Bible.

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<sup>1</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Christian and Rock Music* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2000), p. 23.

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We are faced with choices in our modern daily lives on how to worship God. We use modern translations of the Bible for enhanced comprehension—not just the King James Version. We show our respect for God by dressing in appropriately modest, yet modern styles of clothing—without feeling compelled to wear the robes of ancient times. Our approach to music should be the same. However, we must be careful not to go to the other extreme of ignoring music that has been “tried and tested,” completely replacing it with newer, more modern hymns simply for the sake of change or to be more “modern.”

We should not develop our music programs to appeal to any particular group of people in our congregation—young or old. Our music must be representative of God’s way and it must be for worshipping and praising Him and edifying His people. If our goal is to worship and praise the great God of this universe every time we come together on the Sabbath or Holy Day, then all our music must be filtered through this foundational principle. Is it truly worshipful and praiseworthy? Does it assist us in praising God or does it hinder us?

With the preceding points in mind, our music must be representative of God’s laws, mind and spirit. If it is focused on praising and worshipping God, it will be acceptable and pleasing to Him and it will fulfill the function for which it was created.

In the Old Testament music was found in the temple—both instrumental and singing. The exact nature of this music is difficult to know with certainty, but the issue of secular versus religious can be established. We must be careful in the Church that we not blend the two to the point of being offensive to God. The decision as to the appropriateness will have to be made by the Church when it comes to questionable styles and in determining what will be used and what will not be used. We must always strive to represent the mind of Christ in these matters.

As in any case of our doctrines and teachings, we must ask the first and most important question—what does the Bible have to say about this subject? To give a more comprehensive picture of what the Bible says about music, the following pages will take us through the Scriptures to address that question. In the appendix are listed all the scriptures that reference music or singing in the Bible. The body of this paper will provide highlights of this study. For this review we have divided the Bible into seven sections: (1) Genesis through Deuteronomy; (2) Joshua through Ruth; (3) Samuel through Chronicles; (4) Ezra through Job; (5) Psalms through Song of Solomon; (6) Isaiah through Malachi; and (7) Matthew through Revelation.

### **Genesis Through Deuteronomy**

Genesis is a Greek word meaning “origin,” “source,” “generation” or “beginning.” The original Hebrew title *Bereshith* means “In the Beginning.” The first five books of the Bible compose the law or the “Torah” and, as a group, are commonly referred to as the “Pentateuch.” What can we learn in this early stage of human experience about music, worship and our Creator?

**Genesis 4:21:** “His brother’s name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute.”

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This verse has led many to conclude that Jubal was the inventor of these instruments. The harp (Hebrew *kinnor*) is commonly identified as a lyre by most musicologists. This is the only kind of string instrument mentioned in the Pentateuch. The flute (Hebrew *ugab*) is a general word for a pipe-kind of wind musical instrument. Because only these two instruments are mentioned does not prove that other types of instruments did not exist.

We see that this chapter gives important, foundational information about the history of early mankind prior to the Flood of Noah's time. As Genesis 6:5 states, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Therefore it is highly probable that music was also perverted during this period of time.

The picture is very different after the Flood. Archaeological excavations in southern Mesopotamia have unearthed a multitude of musical records and instruments, which give a remarkably clear understanding of musical culture in the early post-Flood world. Such information is available in sources that describe the following practices.

"All the cities in this region had their temples which worshipped Ishtar and Tammuz. The priests (precentors) intoned a liturgical cantillation that was developed and formalized with the astrologers and mathematicians of the day. This is the origin of the 'weeping for Tammuz' ritual that is mentioned in Ezekiel 8:14. This fixed liturgical chant was endorsed by 'Ishtar, the patroness of litanies, who understand[s] the measures of the psalming.'" <sup>2</sup>

"It was the 'greatest system of musical ritual in any ancient religion,'" <sup>3</sup> which has influenced religious musical practice down to the present day.

"One cannot doubt the great influence of the Mesopotamian temples upon the late Jewish Church and upon Christianity. One recalls that the Mesopotamian 'kalu' or temple precentor had to be skilled in an eight-day liturgy, each day of which would have had its appropriate 'trope' or 'tone' ('the octoechos of the Byzantine Church, and the eight Gregorian tones of the Roman Church')." <sup>4</sup>

"Although the Prophet cries 'Babylon is fallen, fallen,' the plain chant of the Roman Church today carries the titles 'Primus gravis, Secundus tristis, and Tertius mysticus' which are but ehoidal relics from the ancient Mesopotamian past of probably 6000 years ago." <sup>5</sup>

In summary, the Bible and secular history show that the post-Flood world quickly followed the degenerative example of pre-Flood Cain and his descendants. Shortly after the Deluge, mankind established a God-defying, idolatrous civilization—which undoubtedly

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<sup>2</sup> *The New Oxford History of Music*, Volume 1, *Ancient and Oriental Music*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., chapter 5, "The Music of Ancient Mesopotamia," pp. 228-254.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

included the wrong type of music—that has been embraced by much of the world and which carries on to this day. That is why the Bible calls this modern system and culture “Babylon the Great” (Revelation 17:5) and why Christ will destroy it when He returns (Daniel 2:44).

**Genesis 31:27:** “Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp?”

“Timbrel” is translated from the Hebrew *tof*. The King James Version translates this as “tabret.” Most modern authorities understand *tof* to be a general word for a small hand drum or tambourine.

“Harp” in this verse is translated from the Hebrew *kinnor*, which is widely understood to be a lyre that has two vertical arms with an upper horizontal crossbar separating them. The strings are of the same length but different thickness and are stretched between the lower sound chamber and the upper crossbar. There are also a few less common asymmetrical varieties.

In contrast, the harp generally has a curved one-sided body upon which strings of uneven length and thickness are strung. There are also lower horizontally chested varieties, which are sometimes illustrated in ancient Assyrian and other bas-reliefs.

After Genesis we come to the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which describe the development of the nation of Israel and a more formal worship with the introduction of the Levitical system. Here we find more information about music and its use in worship.

**Exodus 15:1-2:** “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 LORD is my strength and song . . . He is my God, and I will praise Him.’”

This is the first of many references to singing to the Eternal, and expressing thanks and praise to Him, which should be one of the main purposes of music.

**Exodus 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. And Miriam answered them: ‘Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!’”

This is the first biblical reference to dancing, and is mentioned in the context of expressing praise and thankfulness to God for His deliverance from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. This example is similar to Psalm 149:3 and 150:4.

Biblical Hebrew has no less than 12 verbs to express the act of dancing, and scriptures such as Judges 21:19-21 describe women dancing during “a yearly feast of the LORD.” This is in addition to the example of David dancing “before the LORD with all his might” (2 Samuel 6:14) and other verses similar to the Psalms mentioned above.



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This kind of dancing was an expression of emotion in the form of bodily movements. However, because of the kind of dancing usually done in the modern world, many churches have prohibited dancing of any kind to avoid bringing secularism and impropriety into worship services. While dancing is not mentioned as being part of the tabernacle or temple service, we need to be careful to properly evaluate dancing for religious purposes. The Bible certainly does not condemn dancing as an appropriate means of expressing thanks.

**Exodus 19:13, 16, 19:** “When the trumpet sounds long [or very loud] . . .”

All three of these verses have this same phrase. The Hebrew word for “trumpet” in verse 13 is *yobal*, while the “trumpet” in verses 16 and 19 is *shophar*. Both Hebrew words refer to a ram’s horn, which was used for signaling rather than a musical instrument. This was not a part of worship but a call to assembly.

**Exodus 28:33-34; 39:25-26:** “. . . bells of gold . . .”

The Hebrew word for “bell” is *paamon*. These were little golden bells attached to the lower seam of the high priest’s purple garment. They produced an unobtrusive sound that was just loud enough to indicate his whereabouts, but not overly loud to interfere with the ceremony he was performing. They are not considered to be musical instruments.

**Exodus 32:18-19:** “. . . the voice of those who sing . . . he saw the calf and the dancing . . .”

Here dancing was involved in the idolatrous and licentious behavior of the children of Israel, while Moses was on the mountain with God. It was done in a carnal attitude and for an improper purpose that was condemned by God.

**Numbers 10:2-10:** “Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the assembly and for directing the movement of the camps . . . the priests, shall blow the trumpets . . . When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets . . . You shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings.”

The Hebrew word for “trumpet” in these verses is *chatsotserah*. This instrument was made of silver by command. It was a long cylindrical tube, slightly flared at the end, which lacked the valves of a modern trumpet. It could produce the lower notes of the harmonic series and was therefore able to sound a number of musical motifs.

**Deuteronomy 31:19, 30:** “Write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths . . . Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song until they were ended.”

This is an example of a song being a poem or narrative, rather than a song in the musical sense. Notice that Moses spoke—not sang—these words (Deuteronomy 32:45). These were the

final thoughts, instructions, admonitions and warnings of Moses that he gave to Israel just before he went to die on Mount Nebo. They are preserved from Deuteronomy 32:1-43 in literary form for the people's future, continual reference, so they would be able to prolong their days in the land which they were about to possess (verse 47).

We can summarize the first five books of the Bible as establishing a foundation for music in the worship of God. We see a distinct difference between the use of music and dance for proper praise and thanksgiving to God and that used in worshipping pagan gods. Under the Levitical system Israel was given very specific guidance to worship God properly and not as the world worshipped its gods (Deuteronomy 12:31-32).

### Joshua Through Ruth

The next section of Scripture takes us through a very difficult time in the history of the nation of Israel. We follow Israel through the post-Moses/Joshua period when there was often confusion and difficulty. This was the period of the judges when we are told "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

**Joshua 6:13:** "Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets."

"A long blast" was a signal distinct from the continual blowing of trumpets.<sup>6</sup> The trumpet mentioned here is the *shofar*, or ram's horn (Joshua 6:4, 6, 8, 13), used for signaling as in times of attack (Numbers 10:5-10).

"Near the southwest corner of the temple, Professor Mazar found a stone from the parapet inscribed *le beit hat-teai'ah* ('to the place of trumpeting'), which was denoted the place where the trumpet was blown to mark the beginning of the Sabbath."<sup>7</sup>

**Judges 5:1:** "Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying . . ."

"The victory over the Canaanites was also commemorated in a poem of rare beauty. Called the 'Song of Deborah,' this masterpiece expresses heartfelt praise to God for leading [H]is people in triumph. It is a hymn of thanksgiving, a song of victory like Exodus 15 or Psalm 68. The poetry itself is magnificent, featuring many examples of climactic (repetitive) parallelism (vv. 7, 19-20, 27) and onomatopoeia (v. 22). Climactic parallelism is also well known from Ugaritic, a fact that suits the ancient character of this song that contains archaic language and a host of difficult forms. Few deny that the ode was written by an eyewitness soon after the events it celebrates. Deborah is usually

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<sup>6</sup> Alan Knight, *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* (Antioch, CA: ARK Research, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Frank E. Gaebelien (ed.), *Expositor's Bible Commentary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985).

considered the author; the connection between prophetess and music is a natural one . . . ”<sup>8</sup>

“The historical introduction (‘Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying’) takes the place of a heading, and does not mean that the song of Deborah and Barak which follows was composed by them jointly, but simply that it was sung by them together, in commemoration of the victory. The poetess or writer of the song, according to vv. 3, 7, and 12, was Deborah. (from *K & D*). And, as Miriam took up the first verse of the song of Moses (Ex 15:21), and sang it as an antiphony, so Barak, with the chorus of men, answered the song of Deborah by singing Judges 5:2, which is also exactly suited for an antiphon, summing up as it does the subject matter of the whole ode.”<sup>9</sup>

“Judges 5:1. The mode in which it was sung was most probably that adopted by Hebrew women in celebrating public deliverances (Ex 15:20; 1 Sam 18:6), Deborah, as leader, giving forth the tuneful utterances, echoed by a chorus of female singers, in presence of Barak and his victorious troops on their return from the triumphant pursuit.”<sup>10</sup>

**Judges 7:16-20:** “Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers . . . ‘When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!”’ So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, ‘The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!’”

“By spreading out around the Midianites, Gideon’s troops would create the impression of being a much larger army. The ‘trumpets’ (*shoparot* ‘shofars’) were the same ram’s horn type used by Ehud and Gideon to summon the troops. Their value was not as musical instruments but as noise-making devices. Only the leaders would give signals on the trumpets; so three hundred trumpets normally represented a sizable army. When Joshua captured Jericho, only seven priests had trumpets (Joshua 6:6). The empty jars were used to hide the light of the torches until the proper moment arrived. Samson also used torches to frustrate the enemy in Joshua 15:4-5. The soldiers may have been mystified as to the actual purpose of such unusual weapons, but their orders were to follow Gideon’s example carefully (v. 17). After blowing the trumpets, they were to shout the war cry (v. 18), given in its full form in v. 20. The sequence of trumpet blast and war cry was also used at Jericho.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Expositors Bible Commentary of the Old Testament*.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Barnes; *Barnes’ Notes on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983).

<sup>10</sup> Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House).

<sup>11</sup> *Expositors Bible Commentary of the Old Testament*.

In summary, we see that this section of Scripture contains little information on music as a form of worship. We discover that musical instruments were widely used for alarm and in warfare. While these instruments can also be used for music in worship, during this period in the history of Israel we find little information about such usage.

### Samuel Through Chronicles

The next period of time could well be called the “golden age” of Israel. Under David and Solomon Israel truly became a world power. It was during this time period that the temple was built and formal worship was again established.

**1 Samuel 10:5:** “After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying.”

“The [Hebrew] *nebel* is the Greek equivalent of a harp or lyre. It was an instrument of twelve strings which were plucked with the fingers (Josephus, *Antiquities* 7. 12. 3). It was larger than the *kinnôr* [lyre] with a deeper tone. The lyre had two arms with a box-shaped body (a Canaanite version). David played such an instrument. It was the main instrument in the second temple orchestra. The *nebel* was the number two instrument and probably less costly than the *kinnôr*. In the Mishnah it is stated that there never were less than two harps or more than six in the orchestra.”<sup>12</sup>

“Three of the twenty-seven usages indicate its use in godless revelry (Isaiah 5:12), pagan worship (Isaiah 14:11) and the diluted worship which Amos condemned (Amos 5:23). It was played by the bands of prophets (1 Samuel 10:5) and David used it for worship (2 Samuel 6:5). Solomon provided harps for temple worship (1 Kings 10:12). Otherwise, the *nebel* were always used in worship (Psalm 57:8 [H 9]; Psalm 81:2 [H 3]; et al.). The important place afforded music in the worship of God shows that God responds favorably to man’s communication with him in music and that God communicates to man not only cognitively but also in his emotions.”<sup>13</sup>

**1 Samuel 16:16:** “Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well.”

**1 Samuel 18:6:** “Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.”

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<sup>12</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

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**1 Samuel 21:11:** “And the servants of Achish said to him, ‘Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not *sing of him to one another* in dances, saying: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?”’”

**2 Samuel 6:5** “Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments* of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on *sistrums*, and on cymbals.”

“In 2 Samuel 6:5 we meet with a word that occurs nowhere else, and whose meaning is quite uncertain. The King James Version translates ‘cornets,’ the Revised Version (British and American) ‘castanets,’ and in the margin ‘sistra.’ The Hebrew *mena`an`im* may have been the Hebrew *sistrum*, an instrument formed of two thin, longish plates, bent together at the top so as to form an oval frame, and supplied with a handle at the lower end. One or more bars were fixed across this frame, and rings or disks loosely strung on these made a jingling noise when the instrument was shaken. This interpretation is supported by the derivation of the word, the Vulgate, and the rabbins.”<sup>14</sup>

**2 Samuel 6:14, 16:** “Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod . . . Michal, Saul’s daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.”

**2 Samuel 22:1:** “Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this *song*, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.”

**2 Samuel 22:50:** “Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, and *sing* praises to Your name.”

“To sing, sing praise, make music 1a) (Piel) 1a1) to make music, sing 1a2) to play a musical instrument. Origin: a primitive root (*Strong’s*) . . . The people of Israel lift their voices and their instruments to praise their God as long as they live (Psalm 104:33; Psalm 146:2). Several times this praise is directed toward the ‘name’ of the Lord, for the ‘name’ stands for God himself (Psalm 66:4; Psalm 18:49 [H 50]; Psalm 135:3).”<sup>15</sup>

Continuing in the book of Kings we read about instruments being made for the temple. There are references to specific instruments as well as singers and musicians. Music was a very important part of worship in the temple.

**1 Kings 10:12:** “And the king 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.”

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<sup>14</sup> Stanley Morris, (revision ed.) Melvin Grove Kyle, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*.

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Even though he did not live to see the temple built, David appointed individuals to be responsible for the music used for worship in the tabernacle as a forerunner to worship in the temple. The most often used instruments in the temple were the lyre and the harp. These were made for the singers to use in singing praises to God.

To help uphold and carry out the directives for sacrifices and the reverence of the sanctuary (Leviticus 19:30; 26:2), David appointed a group of 4,000 men (more than 10 percent) from the total of 38,000 Levites to praise with music and minister the service of song to God (1 Chronicles 6:31-32 and 23:3-6). Their duty was to help the Aaronic priesthood in the service of the house of the Lord, during the morning and evening sacrifices of the weekly Sabbaths, new moons and appointed feasts (1 Chronicles 23:28-32).

To insure the quality of this musical offering, these Levites were full-time professional musicians, free from other service (1 Chronicles 9:33), who were supported by the tithes of the people (Numbers 18:24; Nehemiah 12:44-47; 13:5, 10, 12). They were mature, musically trained individuals, who were required to be at least 30 years old (1 Chronicles 23:3), and whose leaders and teachers had to have musical understanding and be especially skillful (1 Chronicles 15:22).

So important was this service of music that David and the captains of his army personally chose the top three leaders—Asaph, who had previously been appointed as chief musician (1 Chronicles 16:5; 25:2), Jeduthun and Heman, all of whom were under the direct authority of the king. They, in turn, directed their sons (four of Asaph, six of Jeduthun, and fourteen of Heman—24 in all to match the 24 courses of priests), in the instruction of the songs of the Lord. We see references to this set-up throughout the two books of Chronicles.

**1 Chronicles 6:31-33:** “Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest. They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order. And these are the ones who ministered with their sons: Of the sons of the Kohathites were Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel . . .”

What was this music like? How did it sound? There were singers and instruments used in worship at the tabernacle and later in the temple itself. It is difficult to know very much about ancient Hebrew music, but there is some information available. Scholars do not agree as to how this information should be interpreted and without original sources it becomes extremely difficult. There are scholars at both extremes—those who claim we can know and those who claim we cannot know at all. And, of course, there are those who fall somewhere in the middle—information is available but it is not definitive. Here is one quote from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*:

“It is disappointing after all this to have to confess that of the nature of Hebrew music we have no real knowledge. If any system of notation ever existed, it has been entirely lost.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

Other scholars disagree with the *ISBE* and clearly see the references in 1 Chronicles 15 to be about pitch or tone. Here is what Gesenius has to say about the term *sheminith*:

“... *eighth* (Ex. 22:29; Lev. 9:1, etc. Fem. *Octave*, in music a word denoting the lowest and gravest note sung by men’s voice (basso), opp. to [*alamoth*]; see 1 Ch. 15:21, and Psalm 6:1; 12:1 (where some incorrectly understand an instrument.”<sup>17</sup>

**1 Chronicles 9:29, 33:** “Some of them were appointed over the furnishings and over all the implements of the sanctuary . . . These are the singers, heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites, who lodged in the chambers, and were free from other duties; for they were employed in that work day and night.”

One of the most spectacular events in the history of Israel was the moving of the ark during the time of David. The first attempt to move the ark ended in disaster. In preparation for moving the ark into the Jerusalem, David organized singers and musicians for the journey. This story is found in 1 Chronicles 13.

**1 Chronicles 13:5, 8:** “So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim . . . Then David and all Israel played *music* before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.”

Music was important in honoring and praising God during this very special occasion. This was not a “worship service,” but it was an opportunity to sing praises to God and mark a special event with music—both singing and instrumental. Music, worship and God are all intertwined during this time in the Old Testament.

Because of the failure to bring the ark into Jerusalem on this first try, David instructs that the ark be left in the home of Obed-Edom. We are told that it remained there for three months before David made a second attempt to bring the ark into the city to the place that had been prepared. Once again the moving of the ark into the city was accompanied by music and musicians.

**1 Chronicles 15:1-3:** “David built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it . . . And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it.”

**1 Chronicles 15:16-17:** “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. So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of their brethren, the sons of Merari, Ethan the son of Kushaiah . . .”

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<sup>17</sup> H.W.F. Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1979).

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During the ceremony marking the bringing of the ark into Jerusalem, David begins dancing and playing music. His wife sees him and despises him. This was not a “worship service,” but it was a clear expression of David’s joy and thankfulness to God. Music is used here to express emotion and praise. It is a good example of the use of music, but does not by itself prove that dancing and all types of music are acceptable in a worship service. This was a ceremony marking the arrival of the ark and not worship on a Sabbath or a Holy Day.

**1 Chronicles 15:28-29:** “Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps. And it happened, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul’s daughter, looked through a window and saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart.”

**1 Chronicles 16:41-42:** “. . . and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because His mercy endures forever; and with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the *musical instruments of God*. Now the sons of Jeduthun were gatekeepers. Then all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.”

What is meant by the expression “musical instruments of God”? Are there special instruments approved by God? Most translations do not render this phrase as “instruments of God” which would imply an instrument of divine origin.

“And with them were Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those who should sound aloud, and *with instruments for the songs of God*, and the sons of Jeduthun for the gate” (NASB).

“And with them Heman and Jeduthun *with* trumpets and cymbals for those that should sound aloud, and *with instruments for the songs of God*; and the sons of Jeduthun to be at the gate” (ASV).

The Septuagint translates this phrase as “instruments of the songs of God.” The Vulgate offers this translation—“to sing to God.” The RSV has “instruments for sacred song.” The Young’s Literal Translation has “instruments of the song of God.” Adam Clarke is quite emphatic that this verse isn’t describing “godly” versus “ungodly” instruments.

Most commentaries reach the same conclusion. These were instruments that were used for songs of praise to God.

“None of the versions understand the words [as] implying instruments of music of God, but instruments employed in the song of God, or to praise God; as also the Targum.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*.



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Later we find David taking credit for making instruments to be used in praising God. Here we also find the number 4,000 for those involved in music.

**1 Chronicles 23:5:** “And four thousand praised the LORD with musical instruments, ‘which I made,’ said David, ‘for giving praise.’”

**1 Chronicles 25:1, 6:** “Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals . . . All these were under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the authority of the king.”

David did not live to see the temple completed and dedicated to the worship of God. The ceremony that marked the bringing of the ark into the temple was equally as elaborate as what David had done when the ark was moved into Jerusalem. These events are recorded in 2 Chronicles. Here we are given a glimpse into the celebration that occurred at this most wonderful moment in the history of Israel. Music played a major role in these festivities.

**2 Chronicles 5:12-13:** “And the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets . . . when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: ‘For He is good, for His mercy endures forever,’ that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud.”

We have an additional statement confirming that there were instruments to be used in the temple in the worship of God and that these instruments had been made by David (or at his direction). These were not “divine” instruments in reference to origin but in reference to use. They were being used in the temple for praising God.

**2 Chronicles 7:6:** “And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had made to praise the LORD, saying, ‘For His mercy endures forever,’ whenever David offered praise by their ministry.”

Further proof is provided toward the end of 2 Chronicles that the music in the temple was established by David, which would imply a very specific standard.

**2 Chronicles 23:18:** “Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was established by David.”

When Hezekiah brought about reform in Judah, one of his first actions was to cleanse the temple. In cleansing the temple, once again music was established in a prominent position based on instructions that had been given previously by David.

**2 Chronicles 29:3:** “In the first year of his [Hezekiah’s] reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them.”

**2 Chronicles 29:25-30:** “And he [Hezekiah] stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, *according to the commandment of David*, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets. The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped. Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.”

David had given explicit orders on where the Levites were to stand and how instruments were to be used in the worship of God. Even though he never lived to see the temple, David had a tremendous impact on the way music was used in the worship at the temple. Here we see that the Levites were stationed “according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet” and all this was according to “the commandment of the LORD by His prophets.” David had God’s approval to lay out the design of worship and the part that music would play in that worship.

Some additional comment is appropriate regarding this section of Scripture. Starting at the beginning of the chapter, Hezekiah is found restoring the temple practices that had been corrupted by Ahaz and other predecessors. After cleansing and sanctifying God’s house and its utensils, instruction was given to the Levitical musicians and priests to be stationed according to the commandment of David, Gad the seer and Nathan the prophet, which “was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets” (verse 25).

The Levites were to use cymbals (Hebrew, *metsiltayim*), stringed instruments (Hebrew, *nebel*), harps (Hebrew, *kinnor*), and the priests blew the silver trumpets (Hebrew, *chatsotserah*). The instruments the Levites played are termed “instruments of David” in verses 26 and 27. Hezekiah then commanded them to “sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer” (verse 30).

We see from this example that David and his music played a prominent role in establishing the music for worship in ancient Israel. In 1 Chronicles chapter 6 we read that the responsibility for music was given to “men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD,” and we are told that they were “ministering with music” (verses 31-32).

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What can we learn from the music used for worship in the temple? The critical point is that when it came to formal worship, God (through David, Nathan, Gad and other prophets) gave direction on how it was to be done. Even the instruments that were used are described in 1 and 2 Chronicles. A further study of music and instruments will show that different types of music and even instruments were commonly used for secular purposes. The lesson we should learn is one of distinction.

The accounts of music in the temple can serve to give us insight into the mind of God. We should therefore give heed to this by making a distinction between popular, secular musical styles and those that are of higher quality and on a more godly, reverent and worshipful level. This will require mature musical and spiritual judgment on the part of the Church leadership, as well as those who are directly responsible for musical production in the Church.

Another question that we should ask as a result of the worship services in the temple is how much of this should be adapted for our day? We know that today is a different administration and that the Church is quite different from the temple of the time of ancient Israel. Neither women nor gentiles were allowed to worship in the temple. But under the New Covenant “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Therefore one must not conclude that simply because certain instruments are not mentioned as being used in the temple that those same instruments (or modern descendants of those instruments) are forbidden for use in the Church today.

Of course, one must ask why certain instruments were not used and whether we should use them in the Church today. This is a different question that must be handled by the leadership of the Church in deciding the parameters for music and instruments. It should be based on style and quality of music and the overall effect upon the Church rather than on an individual’s personal preference. We cannot duplicate the atmosphere or the rituals that were so intrinsically a part of the temple and worship of ancient Israel. The New Testament gives us no reason to even believe that this is necessary. What we can learn is the lesson of quality and respect for our Creator whenever we gather to worship Him. This should be evident in our music, our speaking, our praying and our fellowship, regardless of the age we live in.

**2 Chronicles 30:21:** “So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments.”

When studying music in the Old Testament, we find evidence of all three major instrument groups (wind, percussion and string) in addition to singing. Here we have an example of singing “accompanied by loud instruments.”

“[T]he musical instruments employed by the Hebrews included representatives of the three groups: string, wind, and percussion. The strings comprised the Hebrew *kinnor*, or Hebrew *nebhel*; the winds: the Hebrew *shophar*, or Hebrew *qeren*, Hebrew *chatsotserah*, Hebrew *chalil*, and Hebrew *’ughabh*; percussion: Hebrew *toph*, Hebrew *metsiltayim*,

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Hebrew *tsltselim*, Hebrew *mena'an'im*, Hebrew *shalishim*. Besides these, we have in Daniel: Hebrew *mashroqitha'*, Hebrew *cabbekha'*, Hebrew *pecanterin*, Hebrew *cumponyah*. Further, there are Chaldean forms of Hebrew *qeren* and Hebrew *kithara*.

“We have no exact information as to the materials of which these instruments were made. In 2 Samuel 6:5 the King James Version, mention is made of ‘instruments made of fir wood’ (the English Revised Version has ‘cypress’), but the text is probably corrupt, and the reading in 1 Chronicles 13:8 is preferable. According to 1 Kings 10:11 f, Hiram’s fleet brought from Ophir quantities of Hebrew *`almugh* (2 Chronicles 2:8; 9:10, Hebrew *`algum*) wood, from which, among other things, the Hebrew *kinnor* and Hebrew *nebhel* were made. Probably this was red sandal-wood. Josephus (Ant., VIII, iii) includes among articles made by Solomon for the temple Heb: *nebhalim* and Hebrew *kinnoroth* of electrum. Whether we understand this to have been the mixed metal so named or amber, the frame of the instrument could not have been constructed of it. It may have been used for ornamentation.”<sup>19</sup>

“The development of ‘professional’ singers is documented in the Bible. But the period of Samuel, David, and Solomon was the golden age of Hebrew music, as it was of Hebrew poetry. Music was now for the first time systematically cultivated. It was an essential part of training in the schools of the prophets (1 Samuel 10:5; 19:19-24; 2 Kings 3:15; 1 Chronicles 25:6). There now arose also a class of professional singers (2 Samuel 19:35; Ecclesiastes 2:8). The temple, however, was the great school of music. In the conducting of its services large bands of trained singers and players on instruments were constantly employed (2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 5; 16; 23; 1 Chronicles 25:1-6). In private life also music seems to have held an important place among the Hebrews.”<sup>20</sup>

“That the Hebrews were in ancient times, as they are at the present day, devoted to the study and practice of music is obvious to every reader of the Old Testament. The references to it are numerous, and are frequently of such a nature as to emphasize its importance. They occur not only in the Psalter, where we might expect them, but in the Historical Books and the Prophets, in narratives and in declamations of the loftiest meaning and most intense seriousness. And the conclusion drawn from a cursory glance is confirmed by a closer study.”<sup>21</sup>

The place held by music in the Old Testament is unique. Besides poetry, it is the only art that seems to have been cultivated to any extent in ancient Israel.

From the traces of it extant in the Old Testament, we can infer that the vocabulary of musical terms was far from scanty. This is all the more significant when we consider the condensed and pregnant nature of Hebrew. “Song” in our English versions of the Bible represents at least half a dozen words in the original.

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<sup>19</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>20</sup> M.G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 1897; ASCII ed., Ellis Enterprises, Inc., 1988, public domain.

<sup>21</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

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The events, occasions and occupations with which music was associated were extremely varied. It accompanied leave-taking with honored guests (Genesis 31:27), celebrated a signal triumph over the nation's enemies (Exodus 15:20) and welcomed conquerors returning from victory (Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 18:6). Processions, such as marriages and funerals (2 Chronicles 35:25), were regulated in a similar way.

By far the most important evidence of the value attached to music by the Hebrews is afforded by the place given to it in divine service. It is true that nothing is said of it in the Pentateuch in connection with the consecration of the tabernacle, or the institution of the various sacrifices or festivals. In later days, at all events, music formed an essential part of the national worship, and elaborate arrangements were made for its correct and impressive performance. These are detailed in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles.

“The books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles describe singing and instruments in the temple. All three types of instruments were used—stringed, wind, and percussion. The purpose in singing and instruments was to praise God. There were professional musicians and singers who performed this service.”<sup>22</sup>

### Ezra Through Job

Things changed rather dramatically after the captivity of Judah. The temple was destroyed and formal worship ceased. The restoration of worship was accomplished over a period of many years and was accompanied by years of struggle. In spite of all the upheavals, music continued to occupy a key role in the worship of God. Singers were among the first group of captives to return to Judah after the Babylonian captivity.

**Ezra 2:64-65:** “The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers.”

When worship was restored in Jerusalem we find the same appeal being made to David's direction. This gives us insight into how important and valued the instructions given by David were regarding music and worship.

**Ezra 3:10-11:** “When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, *according to the ordinance* of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: ‘For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.’ Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.”

When David was not permitted to build the temple, he proceeded, among the last acts of his life, with the assistance of Zadok and Ahimelech, to organize the priestly and musical services to be conducted in the house of God. He divided the priests into 24 courses (1

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

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Chronicles 24:1-19); 16 being of the house of Eleazar and eight of Ithamar. Each course was under a head or chief, and ministered for a week, the order being determined by lot.

The rest of the 38,000 Levites (1 Chronicles 23:4) were divided into 24 courses, each to render some allotted service in public worship: 4,000 in 24 courses were set apart as singers and musicians under separate leaders (1 Chronicles 25:1-31); 4,000 as porters or keepers of the doors and gates of the sanctuary (1 Chronicles 26:1-19); and 6,000 as officers and judges to see to the administration of the law in all civil and ecclesiastical matters (1 Chronicles 26:20-32). This arrangement was reestablished by Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 31:2) and afterwards the four sacerdotal courses which are said to have returned from the captivity were redivided into the original number of 24 by Ezra (Ezra 6:18).

Nehemiah continued the restoration of Judah and the reestablishment of true worship. Music is referred to in connection with the celebration that took place when the wall was dedicated. The giving of offerings and worship in the temple were always accompanied by music. These books lead up to the time between the Testaments. When the Old Testament closes chronologically we have a temple in place, which includes worship based on the pattern set down by David. Music was very important in this structure of worship, but it wasn't just any music.

Much of this section (Ezra through Job) is filled with instructions for setting up temple worship. Music was very much a part of this preparation. We find singers and musicians numbered and appointed a portion of the tithes and offerings along with the Levites. There is a "chief" among the singers and leading musicians. The instruments are referred to as "the musical instruments of David the man of God" (Nehemiah 12:36). Ezra made an attempt to duplicate what David had set up prior to the building of the temple during the time of Solomon. Music was central to the worship in the temple—both under Solomon and again under Ezra.

### Psalms Through Song of Solomon

The very title of the book of Psalms evokes the idea of music and singing. Here are passages from commentaries on the title "Psalms."

"The Hebrew title of this book is *Tehilim* ('praises' or 'hymns'), for a leading feature in its contents is *praise*, though the word occurs in the title of only one Psalm (the hundred forty-fifth). The Greek title (in the Septuagint, a translation made two hundred years before Christ) is *psalmoi*, whence our word 'Psalms.' This corresponds to the Hebrew word *mizmoi* by which sixty-five Psalms are designated in their inscriptions, and which the Syriac, a language like the Hebrew, uses for the whole book. It means, as does also the Greek name, an ode, or song, whose singing is accompanied by an instrument, particularly the harp (compare 1 Chronicles 16:4-8; 2 Chronicles 5:12, 13). To some Psalms, the Hebrew word (*shir*) 'a song,' is prefixed. Paul seems to allude to all these terms in Ephesians 5:19 *psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.*"<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary on the Whole Bible.

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“This book is termed in Hebrew *Sepher Tehillim*, which some learned men derive from . . . hal or . . . halal, to *move briskly, irradiate, shine*; and translate, The Book of the Shinings forth, Irradiations, Manifestations, or Displays . . . But as halal signifies also *to praise*, and praise arises from a sense of gratitude, is the expression of inward joy, and was often exhibited by brisk notes, sprightly music, etc., it may be well denominated *The Book of Praises*, as the major part of the Psalms have for their subject the praises of the Lord . . . A Psalm is called in Hebrew . . . *mizmor*, from . . . *zamar*, to *cut off*, because in singing each word was separated into its component syllables, each syllable answering to a note in the music.”<sup>24</sup>

**Psalm 3 Title:** “A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.” (Used 57 times throughout the Psalms.)

**Psalm 3:2, 4, 8:** “Selah.” (Used 71 times throughout the Psalms.)

“[Selah] was likely used as a musical marker, but its precise significance in Israel’s worship remains unclear.”<sup>25</sup>

“This word [selah], which is found only in the poetical books of the Old Testament, occurs seventy-one times in the Psalms and three times in Habakkuk. It is probably a term which had a meaning in the musical nomenclature of the Hebrews, though what that meaning may have been is now a matter of pure conjecture. (Gesenius and Ewald and others think it has much the same meaning as our interlude, a pause in the voices singing, while the instruments perform alone.)”<sup>26</sup>

In the French book *The Music of the Bible Revealed* by Suzanne Haik-Vantoura, however, we find an explanation that seems to fit every use of the word in the Bible. The author, who is a Jewish music student, concludes that “selah” was part of the sung text and not an instruction to the players. While she does not define the word itself, her work does suggest that “selah” is similar to the word “amen” at the end of a prayer. The purpose would be to emphasize the truth or seriousness of a passage.<sup>27</sup>

**Psalm 4 Title** (and 54 other titles throughout the Psalms): “To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.” (Also see Psalms 4-6; 8-9; 11-14; 18-22; 31; 36; 39-42; 44-47; 49; 51-62; 64-70; 75-77; 80-81; 84-85; 88; 109; 139-40.)

“‘The Chief Musician’ was the superintendent of the music (compare ‘to oversee,’ 1 Chronicles 15:21). ‘To’ prefixed to this means, ‘pertaining to’ in his official character. This inscription is found in fifty-three Psalms and is attached to Habakkuk’s prayer (Habakkuk 3:1-19).”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Adam Clarke’s Commentary.

<sup>25</sup> The Expositor’s Bible Commentary.

<sup>26</sup> William Smith and Ronald Ted Smith, *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* (Nelsonworld Publishers 1988).

<sup>27</sup> Suzanne Haik-Vantoura, John Wheeler ed., *The Music of the Bible Revealed* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

<sup>28</sup> Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary on the Whole Bible.

**Psalms 5 Title:** “To the Chief Musician. With flutes. A Psalm of David.”

“Only Psalm 5 carries this note. The meaning is uncertain. Mowinckel (Psalms of Israel’s Worship 2:210) relates it to the Babylonian ‘flute psalms of lamentation.’”<sup>29</sup>

**Psalms 6 and 12 Titles:** “To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. On an eight-stringed harp. A Psalm of David.”

**Psalms 6 and 12 Titles:** “To the Leader: with stringed instruments; according to the Sheminith” (NRSV).

There is some division among scholars on the exact meaning of the term “sheminith.” The following quotes will show the various ideas espoused by the scholars.

“[P]erhaps an eight-stringed musical instrument. [P]erhaps a musical notation, i.e. an octave.”<sup>30</sup>

“[I]t may denote the manner of singing or musical accompaniment (‘octave’) or possibly an instrument with eight strings.”<sup>31</sup>

**Psalms 13:6:** “I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me.” (See also Psalms 7:17; 13:6; 21:13; 27:6; 33:3; 57:7; 59:16; 65:13; 68:4; 68:25; 68:32; 87:7; 89:1; 96:1; 96:2; 98:1; 101:1; 104:33; 105:2; 106:12; 108:1; 137:3; 137:4; 138:5; 144:9; 149:1.)

**Psalms 33:2:** “Praise the LORD with the harp; make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.” (See also Psalms 43:4; 49:4; 57:8; 71:22; 81:2; 92:3; 98:5; 108:2; 137:2; 147:7; 149:3; 150:3.)

**Psalms 47:5:** “God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.” (See also Psalms 47:5; 81:3; 98:6; 150:3.)

The word “trumpet” in the Psalms is literally a ram’s horn (see Strong’s 7782, *shofar*).

“The most famous wind instruments of the Bible are the trumpet and the horn or (falsely so-called) “cornet” (*Psalm 98:6*, KJV). The Hebrew Scriptures mention the *chatsotserot* (trumpets made of silver) and the *shofarot* (horns made of rams’ or antelopes’ horns). (Both are sometimes called “trumpet” in the KJV, to the confusion of the reader.) The *shofar* . . . is often mentioned in Hebrew Scripture as a warning of war and judgment. Yet it is mentioned . . . as an instrument worthy to be used in the praise of God (*Psalm 98:5-*

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<sup>29</sup> *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*.

<sup>30</sup> F. Brown, S. Driver and C. Briggs, *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Nashville, TN: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1996).

<sup>31</sup> *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*.



6). It was blown on feast days (*Psalms 81:3*). Both instruments were used when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem (*2 Chronicles 15:28*).”<sup>32</sup>

**Psalms 68:25:** “The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the maidens playing timbrels.” (See also *Psalms 81:2*; *149:3*; *150:4*.)

“Miriam’s timbrel (Heb. *toph*) is translated nine times a ‘timbrel’ eight times as ‘tabret.’ This has sometimes been rendered as tambourine. It was probably a drum . . . a wooden hoop and very probably two skins, without any jingling contrivance or sticks . . . like a tom-tom. It was evidently associated with merrymaking or praise (cf. *Exodus 15:20*; *Judges 11:34*; *1 Samuel 18:6*; *Psalms 68:25*). This instrument played an important part from patriarchal times through the period of the restoration.”<sup>33</sup>

**Psalms 120 Title:** “A Song of Ascents.” (See also the titles of *Psalms 121-134*.)

“*Psalms 120-134* from a collection known as the ‘songs of Ascents,’ which in turn is a major part of the Great Hallel psalms (*120-136*). The meaning of the designation ‘song of ascents’ is not clear, whether ‘Pilgrim Songs,’ ‘Song of Degrees,’ or ‘Gradual Psalms.’ The Misnah links the collection of fifteen songs with the fifteen steps of the temple where the Levites sang these songs of ascents (*Middoth 2.5*). It is more likely that the songs were sung in the three annual festival processions, as the pilgrims ‘ascended’ to Jerusalem . . . hence the designation ‘songs of ascents.’”<sup>34</sup>

**Psalms 150:1-6:** “Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.”

The book of *Psalms* concludes with a hymn of praise. This psalm is not about establishing the criteria for religious services. It is all about praising God everywhere—“in His mighty firmament!” Music for praise can take place at any time and in any place. Dr. Cohen in his series *Soncino Books of the Bible* states that this psalm is not about temple worship.

“*In His sanctuary*. Not at the Temple in Zion, but His holy temple in heaven (xi. 4, cii. 20) as the parallelism shows. From His abode there He rules the earth, and all hearts should be directed upwards in praise of Him. This explanation is preferable to that which reads into the verse an invocation to the angels to unite in the praise.

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<sup>32</sup> From Internet: kingdavidsharp.com.

<sup>33</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Moody Press, 1981).

<sup>34</sup> *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*.

*“Every thing that hath breath . . . It is uncertain whether the Psalmist intended to include animals as creatures of God (as in cxlviii. 10); but so far as the human race is concerned the summons to praise is all-inclusive.”*<sup>35</sup>

**Song of Solomon 1:1:** “The song of songs . . .”

The title of this book is superlative: the “song of songs” or “greatest of all songs.” Comparable expressions include “Holy of Holies,” “Lord of Lords” and “King of Kings.” This book contains a collection of lyrics celebrating love without any reference to music except for the title.

From here we come to the prophets. No longer do we have explicit references to a system of music used for worship, but there are musical references.

### Isaiah Through Malachi

A survey of this section of Scripture reveals numerous examples of music playing a role in the daily lives of the people of Israel. We see that music is used for many purposes—worship, praise, festival celebrations, expressions of emotion, etc. Here are a few examples in the books of the prophets.

**Isaiah 5:12:** “The harp and the strings, the tambourine and flute, and wine are in their feasts; but they do not regard the work of the LORD, nor consider the operation of His hands.”

**Isaiah 12:5** “Sing to the LORD, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth.”

“[Sing]. A primitive root; properly to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument, i.e. play upon it; to make music, accompanied by the voice; hence to celebrate in song and music; give praise, sing forth praises.”<sup>36</sup>

**Isaiah 24:16:** “From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: ‘Glory to the righteous!’ But I said, ‘I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.’”

**Isaiah 30:29:** “You shall have a song as in the night when a holy festival is kept, and gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the Mighty One of Israel.”

**Isaiah 38:20:** “The LORD was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the LORD.”

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<sup>35</sup> Dr. A. Cohen, *The Psalms* (New York: The Soncino Press, 1985).

<sup>36</sup> James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999).

“[Stringed instruments] From Hebrew 5059; properly instrumental music; by implication a stringed instrument; by extension a poem set to music; specifically an epigram; stringed instrument, music, song.”<sup>37</sup>

**Isaiah 42:10:** “Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!”

“A new song . . .” The Bible speaks of new songs in the book of Psalms. What are these new songs? (This topic is further discussed in the conclusion of this paper.) One thing we can clearly learn from this term is that music is not static. It is appropriate to develop new music, and this idea is supported by the Scriptures. David’s music would have been new to Moses and so on down through the years. The purpose and overall approach can be the same, but music can change and therefore the title “new.”

**Ezekiel 28:13:** “You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.”

While this verse has been used in the past to establish an improper use of music, in reality there is nothing inherent in this verse about music or musical instruments. The misunderstanding comes from a poor King James (and New King James) translation of this verse. The Jewish Publication Society translates “timbrels and pipes” as “settings and sockets.” The Revised Standard Version has “settings and engravings” and the New International Version has “settings and mountings.” What is being described here are the sockets and grooves used as jewelry settings for the precious stones mentioned in the context that were used for the king of Tyre’s adornment. The king of Tyre was the personification of Lucifer in this chapter. When properly understood, it is clear that Ezekiel 28:13 gives no support whatsoever to the concept that Lucifer is connected with either the creation or initial production of beautiful music. In fact the opposite is true when it comes to Satan and his influence in this world.

**Ezekiel 40:44:** “Outside the inner gate were the chambers for the singers in the inner court, one facing south at the side of the northern gateway, and the other facing north at the side of the southern gateway.”

The temple described in Ezekiel has a special chamber reserved for the singers. Music will continue to be a part of worshipping God even into the world tomorrow.

**Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15:** “At the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.”

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

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References to music in Daniel come from the Babylonian musicians. Instruments were used to announce the worship of an idol. From this example we see that music and musical instruments can be used for good or bad. This is not an indictment on the music or the instruments, but on the purpose.

**Hosea 2:15:** “I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall *sing* there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”

Different translations of this verse reflect a divergence of opinion concerning the translation of the word *‘anah*, but the common translations render it “sing.” There may be a reference here to Exodus 15:1 when Moses and the Israelites sang after the deliverance at the Red Sea. The act of singing as a congregation was a natural response of the people to express joy and thankfulness in song.

**Amos 5:23:** “Take away from Me the noise of your *songs*, for I will not hear the *melody* of your *stringed instruments*.”

The context of this verse refers to the activities associated with what God describes as “your feasts.” It is most likely that these are the feasts of Leviticus 23, but the offerings and music associated with them were repudiated by God because of the pagan practices that had been brought into the worship. If and how the music may have been affected is not specified. God describes their songs as “noise” to Him. The instruments themselves are not criticized or extolled.

**Amos 6:5:** “Who *sing idly* to the sound of *stringed instruments*, and *invent* for yourselves *musical instruments* like David.”

**Amos 6:5:** “You *strum* away on your *harps* like David and *improvise* on *musical instruments*” (NIV).

The various translations seem to favor the action of strumming, which would indicate playing a stringed instrument, most likely a form of harp. The most likely interpretation of the verse applies to improvising or composing music as several translations support rather than inventing musical instruments. The setting of the verse is a partylike activity of food, drink and song rather than a musical workshop. The condemnation in the associated verses refers to ignoring the serious and perilous times and indulging in the physical to avoid facing the sins of the nation. There is no obvious criticism of the music or instruments themselves.

**Habakkuk 3:19:** “The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills. To the *Chief Musician*. With my *stringed instruments*.”

“19 . . . On my stringed instruments—neginoth. This is the prophet’s direction to the precentor (‘chief singer’) as to how the preceding ode (Habakkuk 3:1-19) is to be performed (compare Psalms 4:1, 6:1, titles). The prophet had in mind a certain form of

stringed instrument adapted to certain numbers and measures. This formula at the end of the ode, directing the kind of instrument to be used, agrees with that in the beginning of it, which directs the kind of melody (compare Isaiah 38:20).”<sup>38</sup>

Habakkuk was familiar with having a director of music. The exact instruments were known then and appear to be owned by the prophet, but those details are lost to us now. It appears that he was a musician himself.

### Old Testament Summary

There are numerous references to music and singing in the Old Testament. These verses support the concept that music was used in worship and that God is pleased with song and musical instruments. Our challenge in the Church is not whether we should have music and singing but what type of music and singing is appropriate. Whatever type we choose must meet the overall concept of praise and worship to God in an appropriate, godly manner. This is the message that we find throughout the Old Testament.

### Matthew Through Revelation

The Old Testament is dominated by the temple and the Levitical system. Music played a vital role in the worship that took place under this system. Once we arrive at the New Testament we have a new agreement, called the New Covenant. What part does music play in the Church under the New Covenant?

**Matthew 26:30:** “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

**Mark 14:26:** “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

This is one of the few examples in the Gospels of music being associated with worship. In this case Christ and the apostles sang a hymn to conclude the Passover service.

**Luke 15:25:** “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.”

This is an example of music and dancing outside of a religious setting. It is certainly appropriate to have music and dancing when celebrating special occasions.

**Acts 16:25:** “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

In this case singing is used for praise and worship. It is linked with “praying.” Paul and Silas are not “celebrating” a joyous occasion, but they are “singing hymns.”

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<sup>38</sup> *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary on the Whole Bible.*

**1 Corinthians 14:15:** “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.”

The context involves worshipping with other believers. Paul instructs that speaking, praying and singing should only occur when understanding by the participants is possible, whether through knowledge of the language or through interpretation.

**1 Corinthians 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.”

“Verse 26 gives us a short outline of the elements of worship in Corinth: a hymn, instruction, revelation, a tongue, an interpretation. Some of this is reminiscent of Jewish worship (cf. Matt 26:30; Luke 4:16-30). All is for strengthening the church. The one occurrence of *hekastos* used with each of the following five occurrences of the verb form *echei* (‘each one has . . . each one has . . .’) suggests again the unity and diversification of gifts in the church. One person has this ability, another that one; but all (*panta*) together are to be used to build up the church.”<sup>39</sup>

**Ephesians 5:18-21:** “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

Singing hymns is a manifestation of God’s Spirit working within us. This expression may convey our thankfulness to God, as well as be part of our communication with brethren reflecting the other fruit of God’s Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control), which are reflected in our mutual submission to one another. Songs, hymns and spiritual songs are listed as distinct types of godly musical expression.

**Colossians 3:16:** “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.”

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are again listed as means to teach and admonish others in godly wisdom, as well as praising God in our hearts.

“No rigid distinctions should be made between ‘psalms,’ ‘hymns,’ and ‘spiritual songs.’ Paul is simply emphasizing the rich variety in Christian song. Essentially the three terms heighten the idea of joyousness called for in the passage. If any differences are made, ‘psalms’ may be taken to refer to the OT psalter, ‘hymns’ and ‘spiritual songs’ to distinctly Christian compositions. The great periods of renewal in Christendom have

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<sup>39</sup> *Expositor’s Bible Commentary of the New Testament*, electronic database, 1 Corinthians 14:26.

always been accompanied by an outburst of hymnology. Armitage Robinson describes the apostolic age as ‘characterized by vivid enthusiasm’ and as ‘a period of wonder and delight. The floodgates of emotion were opened: a supernatural dread alternated with an unspeakable joy’ (*St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 168). Robertson writes that Christian hymns ‘demand two things above all else. They must express real emotion of the heart, adoration and worship. They must do it in a way worthy of our Saviour God.’<sup>40</sup>

**1 Thessalonians 4:16:** “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (KJV).

A trumpet is blown at the return of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament the most common Hebrew word for “trumpet” was *shofar*. This was a “ram’s horn.” The Hebrew word *shofar* is found 72 times in the Old Testament. It is translated as “trumpet” 68 times and as “cornet” four times. In the New Testament the Greek word is *salpinx* and it simply means trumpet. It is found 11 times in the New Testament, but only once in Thessalonians.

**Hebrews 2:12:** “Saying, I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will *sing* praise to You.”

Here we have a quote from the book of Psalms. This supports the consistent thread throughout the Bible that singing is used to praise God. This verse is quoted from Psalm 22:22.

**Hebrews 12:18-19:** “For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a *trumpet* and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.”

A trumpet was used at Mt. Sinai to announce the presence of God. In Exodus 19:16 we read “. . . in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.” The trumpet was blown to give warning and announcement.

**James 5:13:** “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him *sing psalms*.”

Singing can be a sign of joy and cheerfulness. In this verse James refers to singing psalms. The Greek word for psalms is *psallo* and comes from a root that means to “sing to the music of a harp.”<sup>41</sup> Singing with a harp or other musical instrument as an expression of joy is a good thing.

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<sup>40</sup>*Expositor’s Bible Commentary of the New Testament*, electronic database, Colossians 3:16.

<sup>41</sup>*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

**Revelation 5:8-10:** “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* [actually *lyre* is a better translation of the Greek *kitharah*], and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints. 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, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.’”

**Revelation 14:2-3:** “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* [*lyre* is a better translation]. 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.”

This scene at the throne of God involves musicians playing their lyres and singers singing. Here we see evidence of choral groups singing accompanied by a musical instrument. The Greek word translated “harpists” (*kithaodos*) refers to someone who plays a stringed instrument (lyre as opposed to a harp) while singing. The Greek word translated “harp” is *kitharah*. The reference is most likely to a lyre and not a harp. The lyre was a stringed instrument used to play music for worshipping and praising God. The image of people floating on clouds in heaven playing harps is simply not biblical.

**Revelation 15:2-4:** “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 [lyres] of God. 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! 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.’”

In this example we also have singing to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. The King James and the New King James translate the Greek *kitharah* as “harp.” This is based upon the common concept that one goes to heaven when he dies and plays a harp. The real instrument being referred to here is the lyre. There are two songs being sung here—the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. These songs were being sung to praise and worship God, and they were accompanied by a stringed instrument.

**Revelation 18:21-22:** “Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.’”

This prophecy is an indictment against the Babylonian system. The destruction of Babylon will be so complete that the musicians will not be playing or singing. This pictures the



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sadness and adversity of this time for Babylon. This verse is not an indictment against music but against the Babylonian system. Of course, the Babylonian system has been instrumental in perverting music and musical styles, but this is not the main point of this reference to music.

### **Summary of the New Testament**

There is little about music or singing in the New Testament books. The references that do exist support the idea that God enjoys music and singing. These activities are used to picture happiness, joy, worship and praise. We see chorale groups (the 144,000), lyres, trumpets and flutes referenced in this fashion. We may certainly conclude that music plays a vital role in worshipping God. There is no specific type or style of music eliminated. There is an emphasis on the purpose for the music rather than the type. We see that music in worship should be respectful, reverent and point us to God.

### **Conclusion**

From beginning to end, the Holy Scriptures contain references to music. At creation, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). The psalmist declared, “I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being” (Psalm 104:33). The apostle Paul instructed members of the Church to encourage one another in the faith with “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Colossians 3:16). John records in his vision of God’s heavenly throne that he “heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 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” (Revelation 14:2-3).

The Bible establishes the vital importance of music and its significant role in the worship of God. Yet the apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 14:17 that “the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Although food is not directly associated with salvation, Paul said that dissension over it was potentially a threat to the work that God was doing (verse 20). Based on an individual’s actions, food had the potential to cause problems in others’ spiritual vision. Likewise, controversy over music can be a problem when it divides brethren. However, the truth of the Bible should produce peace and help edify (verse 19). So we must also conclude that music is not the Kingdom of God, but an essential help in our worship of God.

Musical preference is often subjective. Our musical choices and judgments may be based on personal tastes and likes. If it agrees with our personal preference, we tend to label it “good music,” and if it does not suit our tastes, we tend to label it “bad music.” If God clearly chose what types of music were appropriate for our worship service, we would have no dilemma.

There are many subjects we wish God had given us more information about, but He hasn’t. Perhaps He wants us to learn and grow from the experience of searching out His will in such matters. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2). So we must look to biblical principles to make decisions and judgments in order to arrive at balanced conclusions to the questions we have today.

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We need to ask questions: “What constitutes godly music?” “What kind of music is appropriate?” “What kind of music honors God?” The following biblical principles can be helpful in providing answers.

### **1. What Is the Fruit?**

One way of identifying godly music is by its fruit. After reviewing all Scripture on the subject of music, it becomes evident that the emphasis is on the purpose of the music rather than on the type of music. Biblical music emphasizes praise and thanksgiving. It expresses joy and worships God as it inspires and edifies His people.

When considering any type of music, we should ask, “How does the music affect us?” “Does it have a beneficial, helpful influence or a harmful one?” “Does it have a positive and beneficial effect or a negative and harmful one?” “Does it excite in some way that is wrong (sexually, for example) or produce feelings that are inappropriate?”

What if there are no lyrics or the lyrics are not in violation of God’s law? Music, even without lyrics, can have an effect upon the listener and produce certain fruit. Of course, it would be impossible to anticipate, perceive and satisfy the perceptions and responses in the minds of every listener, but this should be a consideration (2 Samuel 6:16).

Despite the subjective nature of these questions, we should pose similar ones as we consider appropriate music for the Church.

### **2. Godly Music Will Reflect God’s Character**

The Word of God does not contain any command or imperative instruction concerning the use of specific types of music in worship. References in Scripture focus on the use of something rather than the thing itself. For example, trees are not evil, but one can do evil by worshipping them.

We know that God is not a God of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Any music that produces confusion or the opposite of peace is unacceptable. We are instructed that doing things “decently and in order” is God’s way (1 Corinthians 14:40). Being “decent” and “in order” must be considered in selecting music as part of the worship service.

Philippians 4:8 declares an essential quality of God’s character: “Whatever things are true.” When we apply this principle, music in the worship service must be doctrinally sound. Some hymns and special music may affirm distinctive beliefs of the Church of God, while others may express points of faith that we hold in common with other groups, but *all* must reflect doctrinal accuracy and truth. Additional characteristics listed in Philippians 4:8 are “noble,” “just,” “pure,” “lovely” and “of good report.” These provide helpful guidelines in the selection of appropriate music for worship services.

## 3. God's Law Judges Right and Wrong

How do we judge right and wrong in any area of life? We use God's law as the standard. However, as we read through the Ten Commandments and the entire Bible, nowhere are we told what music is appropriate for church services and what is not. We are to make judgments based on the principles contained in God's law.

Any offering made to God must be a righteous offering (Malachi 3:3). Worship service hymns or special music during Sabbath services are a type of offering to God. These must be in harmony with God's laws.

When we consider types of musical instruments that may be used in church services, the Bible contains no criticism of instruments themselves. In the example of Amos 5:23, God repudiated Israel's offerings and music because pagan practices had been brought into the worship of God. The overall approach was wrong. Even lovely music would not make the pagan practices acceptable to God. The musical instruments are not criticized or extolled. We have not found any biblical passages that expressly forbid the use of specific instruments in the worship of God.

Lyrics are another obvious factor. If a song's lyrics communicate ideas or attitudes that violate God's law, then that piece would be considered unsuitable for performing during church services.

We know we should sing and praise God with music on the Sabbath (1 Chronicles 16:7-24; Psalms 68:26; 107:32; 111:1; 149:1; Hebrews 2:12), as well as at the festivals (2 Chronicles 30:21; Isaiah 30:29). But does the Bible give additional clues as to what portion of our service should be devoted to music?

Evidence is found in Colossians 3:16: "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." Ephesians 5:19-20 instructs us to be "speaking to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

While these passages do not give particular indication as to how much of a worship service should be dedicated to music, they do demonstrate that music can be evidence of God's Word thoroughly dwelling in us as we always give thanks.

Just as preaching and prayer are a part of the worship service, music is also an appropriate part of the service. Comparable to preaching and prayer, we are free to establish traditions and practices regarding music in our worship service. There may be special occasions when a pastor and congregation would decide to have a significant portion of the service consist of a musical presentation. An expanded music program would be appropriate at other times as well. The Bible seems to leave it up to the Church to make those decisions.

It seems clear from the Scriptures that the main purpose for music in services is to enhance our worship of God and to inspire the congregation. Special music is a presentation and not a performance. If our musical perspective is one of praise and worship, and not of entertainment, then we can more easily arrive at the proper form of music for services. There is nothing wrong with music for entertainment purposes, but we must not confuse this with worship.

### 4. A New Song

Today's 'sacred' musical choices come in many styles—from classical to contemporary—from old to new. Many people tend to consistently listen to and enjoy a limited repertoire of musical styles. Perhaps we are more familiar with our "old" favorite hymns and songs and think those are the only ones with true value.

But "old" music is a matter of perspective. For King David, the song of Moses was 400 years old. By the time Handel wrote the *Messiah*, the Psalms were over 2,000 years old. Most of our musical preferences are a matter of style and comfort.

God, however, isn't honored with only the "old" songs. David apparently wrote many new songs that became most of the book of Psalms. These songs tell of additional aspects of God's greatness, His love and His plan. Some were composed to rejoice after a trial. God's Word encourages new songs to be written to praise and glorify Him.

It is important to note that nine times the Word of God encourages a "new song" (Psalms 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isaiah 42:10; Revelation 5:9; 14:3). The Hebrew word *chadash*, which is used in all these verses in the Psalms, indicates something new—a fresh, new thing. This is very similar to the Greek *kainos* used in Revelation to mean new—especially freshness (see Appendix A). God does not want us to stop writing songs to Him. It is evident that God wants us to worship Him through music, new and old.

"Hadas means 'new' both in the sense of recent or fresh (as opposite of old) and in the sense of something not previously existing."<sup>42</sup>

"Sing unto him a new song—Do not wear out the old forms: fresh mercies call for new songs of praise and gratitude."<sup>43</sup>

"A 'new song' is one which, in consequence of some new mighty deeds of God, comes from a new impulse of gratitude in the heart, 40:4, and frequently in the Psalms. The 'new song' presupposes new matter. The new song assumes a new form of things. The new song is an echo of the approaching revelation of salvation and of glory, and this is also the inexhaustible material of the joyful tidings that go forth from day to day."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White Jr., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), p. 160.

<sup>43</sup> Adam Clark, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, electronic edition (Cedar Rapids, IA: Parsons Technology, Inc., 1999), Psalm 33:3.

<sup>44</sup> C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 5: Psalms, electronic edition STEP Files (Omaha, NE: Parsons Church Group, 2000), Psalm 33:1-4; Psalm 33:10-11; Psalm 96:1-3.

“A new song—resulting from a continual experience of God’s acts, not only in the great redemptive acts of the past, but as they freshly break into the lives of the present worshipers. This is a newly constructed response to the present redemptive acts. What God accomplishes calls for a ‘new song’ to be sung as He begins his reign in Jerusalem . . . Moses, Miriam, and the Israelites sang a new song after the crossing of the sea.”<sup>45</sup>

“*A new song*. That is to say, a *new* and recent composition on account of recent benefits; or constantly new songs, song succeeding song as daily new material for divine praise offers itself to the attentive student of the works of God. Or *new*, that is, always fresh and full of life, and renewed as new occasions offer themselves: as Job says, ‘My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.’ Or *new*, i.e., not common but rare and exquisite; as the new name in Rev. 2:17; the new commandment, John 13:34. Or this respects the gospel state, wherein is a new covenant (Heb. 8:8), a new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2), a new man (Eph. 2:15), and all things new. 2 Cor. 5:17. *New*, on account of its matter being unknown of men: as in Rev. 14:3. *A new canticle*, a beautiful canticle, and elegantly composed; also a canticle for fresh favours; in like manner, a canticle befitting men who have been regenerated.”<sup>46</sup>

“The first hymn (vv. 9-10) is called a ‘new’ song because there was never any like it before in heaven.”<sup>47</sup>

The Bible nowhere indicates that there is only one single musical style that is appropriate for music in the Church. New songs and hymns with fresh melodies and lyrics are beneficial and appropriate in the worship of our God. What would King David have done if new music were not allowed in his day? We would not have most of the book of Psalms! David may have even written new lyrics to popular melodies of his day to honor God. If we limit our songs and hymns to only one musical style, we are more restrictive than the Bible.

## 5. A Balance of Quality Music

Certainly we do not want to stop singing our favorite songs. Many of these are powerful praises in the worship of God and invoke good memories of the past. However, by adding some new songs to our repertoire we can add new energy, vitality and additional perspective. This can be a very positive message for the entire Church to send to all portions of the congregation—that we are willing to add newness and freshness to the songs we sing.

We advocate prudence in introducing new music. There needs to be a clear process for review and evaluation prior to the introduction of new music. Converted individuals with musical talent should be called upon to render this special service to the Church. It is important

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<sup>45</sup> J.D. Douglas (ed.), *New Commentary on the Whole Bible: Old Testament Volume* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1990); electronic edition STEP Files (Parsons Technology, Inc., 1998), Psalm 33:1-3; Psalm 96:1; Isaiah 42:10.

<sup>46</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David, Psalms 1-57*, electronic edition STEP Files (Parsons Technology, Inc., 1997), Psalm 33:3; Psalm 96:1.

<sup>47</sup> *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*.

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that these issues be resolved at the highest level possible within the Church and not simply at a local congregational level.

Yes, at times music can be a divisive issue. Perhaps we will never agree 100 percent on what is acceptable music. Undoubtedly, we cannot bow to the extremes of music nor replace truth with mere emotionalism. Therefore, the key is utilizing good quality musical compositions with lyrics that are doctrinally accurate. These characteristics bring honor and glory to God and characterize good music.

We cannot stop the process of developing music even though some may feel it is unnecessary. The easy solution is not always the right solution. To simply keep repeating the same hymns without considering a wider variety would not be in the best interest of the Church.

The Bible does allow a variety of musical instruments, as well as diverse styles and types of music when worshipping God. Certainly all music used in services must produce the proper results of peace, pleasure and inspiration through lyrics that are doctrinally correct. Music in the Church of God should express our praise and thanksgiving to God in a spirit of joy and truth that is edifying both to old and young worshippers.

### **6. Offense vs. Tolerance**

Music that would be offensive to a large percentage of the congregation should be avoided. Conversely, we all should be tolerant of a variety of appropriate musical styles that praise God. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165, KJV).

The apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 14:17 that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (NASB). Although food is not directly associated with salvation, Paul said that dissention over food had the potential to threaten the work that God was doing (verse 20).

Likewise, controversy over music is a problem when it divides brethren. However, through the truth of the Bible, music should produce peace and help edify (verse 19).

### **7. Education**

The real answer to the subject of music in the Church is a thorough process of education for the ministry and the membership. Do our members know the purpose of music in the Church? Do they consider it entertainment or worship? Are we educating the members about music? In most cases we are not, but we should be.

If we begin a program of education in the area of music in the Church and show the members from the Word of God how we should worship and praise God with singing and music, we will defuse many of the controversies that would arise. If we can assure the membership that there will be a thorough effort of review and evaluation undertaken prior to the introduction of new music, we will see the vast majority being supportive. If we do not educate the membership

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while giving them this assurance, there will be apprehension and some confusion as to the direction of the Church.

Appropriate godly music can be discerned when we apply these biblical principles. By establishing a comprehensive program of “musical education” in the Church, we should teach from the Word of God how to worship and praise God with singing and music. Through the process of education we can defuse many controversies that could arise and see support from the vast majority.

Music in the Church of God should express our praise and thanksgiving to God in a spirit of joy and truth that is edifying both to old and young. The Bible does allow for diverse styles and types of music and for a variety of musical instruments when worshipping God. Certainly all music used in services must produce the proper results of peace, pleasure and inspiration through lyrics that are doctrinally correct.

“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” (1 Corinthians 14:15). We should make every effort to have a balance of inspiring, uplifting and edifying music in the Church.

## Appendix A—Instrument Table

Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
P E R C U S S I O N	cymbals	metseleth	H4700	<p>“Represents a pair of cymbals, as indicated by the dual form of the Hebrew...their main usage seems to have been priestly.” <i>Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible</i>, Vol. 3, “Musical Instruments” by E. Werner, Abington Press, 1962, p. 470.</p> <p>“All written sources confirm the interpretation of the instrument as cymbals...In the Bible, it is...a guild instrument of the Levites...played...to accompany exclusively religious occasions...two texts give a description of the instrument: made of copper with a bright sound (1 Chronicles 15:19); and ‘of metal, large and broad’ (Josephus, 7.12.3).” <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 528.</p>	<p>1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:16, 19, 28; 16:5, 42; 25:1, 6;</p> <p>2 Chronicles 5:12, 13; 29:25;</p> <p>Ezra 3:10;</p> <p>Nehemiah 12:27</p>
P E R C U S S I O N	cymbals	tselatsal	H6767	<p>“Consisting of two convex pieces of brass one held in each hand, which were clashed together to produce a loud clanging sound.” M. G. Easton, <i>Easton’s Bible Dictionary</i>, Ellis Enterprises, 1993, “cymbal.”</p> <p>“A distinction is made in Psalm 150:5 between two kinds of cymbals...some scholars believe the the <i>tziltzela shama</i> were constructed to produce a loud noise and the <i>tziltzelay teruah</i> a high-sounding tone...Curt Sachs is of the opinion that the former term refers to a clear sound and the latter to a harsh, noisy sound and that the shape of the instrument and the manner in which it was held while being struck (that is, horizontally or vertically) determined its sound.”</p> <p>Macy Nulman, <i>Concise Encyclopedia of Jewish Music</i>, McGraw-Hill, 1975, p. 55.</p>	<p>2 Samuel 6:5;</p> <p>Psalm 150:5</p>
	cymbal	kumbalon	G2950	<p>A “gong...which was a characteristic instrument for weddings and similar joyous occasions.” <i>Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible</i>, Vol. 3, “Musical Instruments” by E. Werner, Abington Press, 1962, p. 471.</p> <p>“These are the familiar Graeco-Roman cymbals...mentioned with ‘sounding brass,’</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 13:1</p>



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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
P E R C U S S I O N				a term which may denote a gong (Montagu, 1965) or signify not a musical instrument but a resonating device at the back of a stage to amplify the voice of a singer or actor (Harris, 1982). This interpretation explains the real sense of Paul's metaphor when he compares speaking without love and deeper understanding to the noise of 'tinkling cymbals' and artificial sound amplification." <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, "Biblical Instruments" by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, pp. 533-534.	
P E R C U S S I O N	sistrums	menana	H4517	"A percussion instrument made of metal plates that produced a sound when moved. The plates were probably pierced by metal rods held in a wooden frame that looked something like a hand mirror. The Egyptian sistra was probably very similar." Ralph Gower, <i>The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times</i> , Moody Press, 1987, p. 308.  "Mentioned a single time in the Bible, this term...is derived from the verb <i>ni'ana</i> ('to shake')...Bayer's identification of it (1964) as a pottery rattle is the most convincing. To date archaeological finds have provided over 70 intact specimens of such percussion instruments of Israelite/Palestinian origin." <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, "Biblical Instruments" by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 527.	2 Samuel 6:5
P E R C U S S I O N	timbrel	toph (taphaph)	H8596 (H8608)	"Tof...Translated <i>timpanon</i> in the Septuagint and as <i>tympanum</i> in the Vulgate, tof (pl. <i>tupim</i> ) is generally understood to be a drum...described as a round wooden frame drum with a diameter of 20-30 cm, without any attached jingles." <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, "Biblical Instruments" by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, pp. 528-529.  "The timbrel was a percussion instrument which was carried and beaten by hand. Considered inappropriate for the Temple, it was probably played primarily by women (Ps 68:25)...Among the Hebrew people, it was associated with merrymaking and	Genesis 31:27; Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 10:5, 18:6; 2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 13:8; Job 21:12; Psalms 81:2; 149:3; 150:4; Isaiah 5:12; 24:8; 30:32; Jeremiah 31:4; Ezekiel 28:13 (taphaph):

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				<p>processions (Gen 31:27).”  <i>Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary</i>,  Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, p. 736.</p> <p>“It has been described as a small portable drum that was made of a wooden hoop, possibly with two membranes and without jingles or sticks. The player struck the drumhead with his fingers. From Biblical sources it is evident, too, that it was most often played by women.”  Macy Nulman, <i>Concise Encyclopedia of Jewish Music</i>, McGraw-Hill, 1975, p. 251.</p>	Psalms 68:25; 81:2; 149:3; 150:4
W I N D	flute (KJ organ)	ugab	H5748	<p>“[It] was probably a primitive shepherd’s pipe or panpipe, though some take it as a general term for instruments of the flute kind, a meaning that suits all the passages cited.”  James Orr (ed.), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>, electronic ed. STEP Files, 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc.,  “Music, III. Instruments 2. Winds (1) The “Ughabh.”</p> <p>“The ‘<i>ugav</i>’ appears in the very first mention of musical instruments in the Bible (Genesis 9:21) and only three times thereafter...the meaning of ‘organ’...seems plausible... Interpretations of the word ‘<i>ugav</i>’ range from a term denoting a musical instrument in general to identification as a pipe, bagpipe, lute or harp, none of which can be supported on either historical or etymological grounds. Sachs (1940, p. 106) offers what is currently the only plausible interpretation: the onomatopoeic effect of the word (u-u), typical of flutes and the connotations of love attached to the instrument suggest that it was a long end-blown flute of the kind found in neighboring cultures.”  <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, pp. 531-532.</p> <p>“Apparently used only for personal or informal religious expression. The opinions of ancient and modern commentators are widely divided with regard to the meaning of the word. Various translations given are: “(1) ‘Pipe,’ denoting a kind of wind</p>	Genesis 4:21; Job 21:12; 30:31; Psalm 150:4

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				<p>instrument...the Targum Onkeles translates the term by the Aramaic <i>abub</i> (pipe). The Authorized Version, too...translates it by 'pipe.'</p> <p>"(2) 'Organ.' <i>Tosafot</i> also translates <i>hirdolis</i> (water organ) by <i>ugab</i>.</p> <p>"(3) 'Pandean pipes' (panpipes) or syrinx.</p> <p>"(4) 'Viola da gamba,' a stringed instrument.</p> <p>"(5) 'Bagpipe,' an instrument rendered by <i>sumponyah</i> and according to some scholars, is identified with the <i>ugab</i>.</p> <p>"(6) 'Vertical Flute,' from <i>agob</i>, meaning 'lovmaking; flutes were closely associated with love charms.'"</p> <p>Macy Nulman, <i>Concise Encyclopedia of Jewish Music</i>, McGraw-Hill, 1975, p. 239.</p>	
W I N D	flute (KJ pipe)	chaliyl	H2485	<p>"This was the most popular of woodwinds in the Near East. Its Greek counterpart is noted in Matt. 9:33; 11:17; Luke 7:32; 1 Cor. 14:7; Rev. 18:22. The instrument was no flute or oboe but a primitive clarinet...Extremely popular for secular purposes."</p> <p><i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>, Vol. 3, "Musical Instruments" by E. Werner, Abington Press, 1962, p. 472.</p> <p>"No doubt the Hebrews brought it with them from their Assyrian home. In the Kouyunjik bas-relief we see players performing on the double flute. It is apparently furnished with a beaked mouthpiece; like that of the clarinet or flageolet. We cannot determine whether the Israelites used the flute with a mouthpiece, or one like the nay; and it is futile to guess. It is enough to say that they had opportunities of becoming acquainted with both kinds, and may have adopted both."</p> <p>James Orr (ed.), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>, electronic ed. STEP Files, 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., "The Chalil."</p> <p>"The root word ('to hollow out' or 'to bore through') is widely distributed throughout the Semitic language area...Modern editions of the Bible usually translate it as 'flute,' although the Septuagint and Vulgate provide grounds of interpreting it as a double- or single-reed instrument. The</p>	<p>1 Samuel 10:5; 1 Kings 1:40; Isaiah 5:12; 30:29; Jeremiah 48:36</p>

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				talmudic literature confirms this viewpoint.” <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 525.	
W I N D	flute	mashroqiy	H4953	<p>“The Book of <i>Daniel</i>...contains a recurring phrase listing a group of musical instruments, often called the ‘Nebuchadnezzar orchestra,’ whose playing served as a signal for the worship of an idol to begin... The names are given in a mixture of Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew... The <i>mashroqita</i>, from the Hebrew word <i>shrq</i> (‘to pipe’)...it should most likely be identified with a tongued instrument (of the <i>zmr</i> type).” <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, p “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 532.</p> <p>“(Chaldee); from a root corresponding to H8319; a (musical) <i>pipe</i> (from its <i>whistling</i> sound):—flute.” James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible</i>, Macdonald Publishing Co., p. 74.</p> <p>“Occurs four times in the Aramaic portions of Daniel; a similar expression (in Judges 5:16) indicates the shepherd’s piping for his flock. The instrument, made of reeds, wood, or bones, was as primitive as its tone was coarse...It was not considered fit for liturgical purposes.” <i>Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible</i>, Vol. 3, “Musical Instruments” by E. Werner, Abington Press, 1962, p. 472.</p>	Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15
W I N D	pipes	neqeb	H5345	<p>“A <i>bezel</i> (for a gem):—pipe.” James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible</i>, Macdonald Publishing Co., p. 80.</p> <p>“This translation is supported by Fetiis: the double flute; Ambros: large flutes; and by Jahn: the nay or Arab flute. It is now, however abandoned, and Jerome’s explanation that neqebh means the ‘setting’ of precious stones is generally adopted.” James Orr (ed.), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>, electronic edition STEP Files, 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., “Neqebh.”</p>	Ezekiel 28:13

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
W I N D	trumpet	chartsotserah	H2689	<p>“The silver trumpet...[was] capable of producing notes of only certain intervals...[and] amplify and channel the sound made by the rapid buzzing of pursed lips... The sons of Aaron [were] the sole players of these silver trumpets...[they] were not just noisemakers; they were...implements in the worship of God.” Frank E. Gaebelien (ed.), <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>, Vol. 2, Zondervan Publishing House, 1990, pp. 778-780.</p> <p>“[The Hebrew] <i>hasotserah</i> is generally understood to be a metal trumpet...an instrument of war and rejoicing...played at assemblies...on feast days...when the Ark was borne in procession...taking of an oath...solemn occasions as the king's accession to the throne...and laying the foundation stone of the Temple...Two forms of sound production are mentioned...a long, strong note (for 'the journeying of the camps' and the assembly of army leaders); and...a blaring tone for an alarm warning of enemy attack or divine admonition...This is the only instrument whose construction and material are mentioned in any real detail in the Old Testament.” <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 526.</p> <p>“In length it was not quite a yard. It was composed of a narrow tube somewhat thicker than a flute, widened slightly at the mouth to catch the breath, and ended in the form of a bell, like the common trumpets.” Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>, Book 3, chap. 12, sec. 6.</p>	Numbers 10:2, 8, 9, 10; 31:6; 2 Kings 11:14; 12:13; 1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:24, 28; 16:6, 42; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 13:12, 14; 15:14; 20:28; 23:13; 29:26, 27; Ezra 3:10; Nehemiah 12:35, 41; Psalm 98:6; Hosea 5:8
	trumpet (ram's horn)	shofar	H7782	<p>“The <i>shophar</i> was a ram's horn...(which) sounded all signals in war and peace; it announced the new moon, the beginning of the Sabbath, the death of a notable'; it warned of approaching danger...Hence, we must conclude that the function of the <i>shophar</i> was to make noise...but not to make music.” <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>, Vol. 3, “Musical Instruments” by E. Werner, Abington Press, 1962, pp. 473-474.</p>	Exodus 19:16, 19; 20:18; Leviticus 25:9; Joshua 6:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16, 20; Judges 3:27; 6:34; 7:8, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22; 1 Samuel 13:3; 2 Samuel 2:28; 6:15; 15:10;

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
W I N D				<p>“The <i>shofar</i>, mentioned more frequently than any other instrument in the Old Testament...is recognized to be the horn of a goat or a ram, and translations such as <i>salpinx</i> (the Septuagint), <i>tuba</i> (the Vulgate) and such modern renderings as ‘trumpet’ are misunderstandings...The two or three notes (with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> overtones) produced by the <i>shofar</i> have an alarming tremolo horn sound described in the Old Testament as <i>qol</i> (‘voice’), <i>teqi’ah</i> (‘blowing of the trumpet’), <i>teru’uh</i> (‘rejoicing’), and <i>yevavah</i> (‘sobbing’, ‘groaning’).”</p> <p><i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, pp. 529-530.</p>	<p>18:16; 20:1, 22; 1 Kings 1:34, 39, 41; 2 Kings 9:13; 1 Chronicles 15:28; 2 Chronicles 15:14; Nehemiah 4:18, 20; Job 39:24, 25; Psalms 47:5; 81:3; 98:6; 150:3; Isaiah 18:3; 27:13; 58:1; Jeremiah 4:5, 19, 21; 6:1, 17; 42:14; 51:27; Ezekiel 33:3-6; Hosea 5:8; 8:1; Joel 2:1, 15; Amos 2:2; 3:6; Zephaniah 1:16; 9:14</p>
W I N D	trumpet	salpigx	G4536	<p>“In the New Testament the <i>salpinx</i>, the long straight Roman trumpet, is an instrument of communication and for the giving of signals...The instrument becomes a symbol of supremacy in the praise of God, the Resurrections and the Last Judgment.”</p> <p><i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 533.</p> <p>“Perhaps from G4535 (through the idea of <i>quavering</i> or <i>reverberation</i>); a <i>trumpet</i>:—trump (-et).”</p> <p>James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament</i>, Macdonald Publishing Co, p. 64.</p>	<p>Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 14:8; 15:52; 1 Thessolonians 4:16; Hebrews 12:19; Revelation 1:10; 4:1; 8:2, 6, 13; 9:14</p>
W I N D	horn (ram’s)	qeren	H7161 H7162	<p>“The two words <i>shophar</i> and <i>keren</i> are used synonymously in Josh 6:4-5...The Revised Version...renders in text ‘ram’s horn,’ in the margin ‘jubilee.’ The former depends on a statement in the Talmud that <i>yobhel</i> is Arabic for ‘ram’s horn,’ but no trace of such a word has been found in Arabic. A suggestion of Pfeiffer’s that <i>yobhel</i> does not designate the instrument, but the manner of blowing, is advocated by J. Weiss. It gives a</p>	<p>Joshua 6:5; 1 Chronicles 25:5; Psalm 75:4, 5, 10; Daniel 3:5</p>

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				<p>good sense in the passages in which <i>yobhel</i> occurs in connection with <i>shophar</i> or <i>keren</i>. Thus in Josh 6:5, we would translate, 'when the priests blow triumph on the horn.'" James Orr (ed), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>, electronic ed. STEP Files, 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., "The Shophar Keren."</p> <p>"The Hebrew term <i>qeren</i> ('animals horn') occurs only once in the sense of a musical instrument...at the blowing of the <i>qeren ha-yovel</i> (ram's horn). Indistinguishable in practice from the <i>shofar ha-yovel</i>." <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, "Biblical Instruments" by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 529.</p>	
S T R I N G	stringed instruments; strings (KJ psaltery)	nebel	H5035	<p>"NEBEL (pl. <i>nebalim</i>). Stringed instrument, mentioned twenty-seven times in the Bible, whose exact identification remains uncertain...The different views given by scholars and Biblical commentators as to its meaning are:</p> <p>"(1) Flavius Josephus regards the <i>kinnor</i> and the <i>nebel</i> as identical instruments...the latter having twelve strings and played with the fingers. The Jerusalem Talmud is also of the opinion that the <i>nebel</i> and <i>kinnor</i> are the same, except that the former has more strings. The Babylonian Talmud also agrees that <i>nebel</i> and <i>kinnor</i> are identical, and, corroborating this view, Rabbenu Gershon comments that, since the verse reads <i>bekinnor benebel asor</i> and does not use the conjunction 'and' between <i>kinnor</i> and <i>nebel</i>, it can be inferred that the instruments are the same...Rashi remarks that the <i>nebel</i> had more strings than the <i>kinnor</i>. The Mishnah mentions that the entrails of a beast are used for the strings of the <i>nebel</i> and <i>kinnor</i>. The strings of the <i>nebel</i> were thicker than those of the <i>kinnor</i>. It is evident too that the tone of the <i>nebel</i> was louder than that of the <i>kinnor</i>; thus possibly the <i>nebel</i> was a larger and lower-pitched instrument.</p> <p>"(2) According to the Septuagint and Vulgate, the <i>nebel</i> is a harp. This meaning is suggested by the numerous renderings of <i>nebel</i> in these works by the Greek <i>psalterion</i> and Latin <i>psalterium</i>.</p>	<p>1 Samuel 10:5; 2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Kings 10:12; 1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:16, 20, 28; 25:1, 6; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 9:11; 20:28; 29:25; Nehemiah 12:27; Psalms 33:2; 57:8; 81:2; 92:3; 108:2; 144:9; 150:3; Isaiah 5:12; 14:11; Amos 5:23; 6:5</p>

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				<p>“(3) The King James Version translates it by both <i>psaltery</i> and <i>viol</i>.</p> <p>“(4) Ibn-Ezra comments that the <i>nebel</i> had ten holes, thus possibly considering it to be a wind instrument in the form of a pipe.</p> <p>“(5) It is possible that it denotes a kind of bagpipe, since <i>nebel</i> in Hebrew also means a ‘wine bottle’ or ‘skin.’ The Jerusalem Talmud suggests that the instrument was called <i>nebel</i> because of its untanned skin.</p> <p>“(6) Abraham Portaleone identifies it with the lute called <i>liuto chitarronato</i> (Ger. <i>Mandoline</i>).</p> <p>“(7) Bathja Bayer, with archaeological and pictorial evidence that is not, however, entirely conclusive, points out that the <i>nebel</i> of the Biblical and Second Temple period was a lyre-type instrument.”</p> <p>Macy Nulman, <i>Concise Encyclopedia of Jewish Music</i>, McGraw-Hill, 1975, p. 182.</p> <p>“The root <i>nbl</i> can be vocalized in two ways, <i>nabal</i> and <i>nebel</i> (Heb. and Akkadian <i>nabal</i>: ‘ritually unclean,’ ‘godless,’ ‘a rogue,’ ‘a carcass’; Heb., Ugaritic and Syrian <i>nebel</i>: ‘pitcher,’ ‘leather bag to contain liquids,’ ‘string instrument’; Botterweck, 1973–, v, 185)... The translations given in the Septuagint and Vulgate are not consistent (<i>nabla</i>, <i>psaltiron</i>, <i>organon</i>, <i>kinira</i>, <i>lyra</i>, <i>kithara</i>).</p> <p>“The function of the <i>nebel</i> was similar to that of the <i>kinnor</i>... A Levite guild instrument (<i>1 Chronicles</i> xv.16), it was played when the Ark was carried in procession (<i>2 Samuel</i> vi.5), at the dedication of the wall (<i>Nehemiah</i> xii.27), at victory celebrations (<i>2 Chronicles</i> xx.28) and as an accompaniment to prophecy (<i>1 Samuel</i> x.5).</p> <p>“It resembled the <i>kinnor</i> in being made of the wood of ‘almug trees’ (<i>1 Kings</i> x.12).</p> <p>“Unlike the <i>kinnor</i>, the <i>nebel</i> seems to have had 12 strings and was played with the fingers (Josephus, vii.12.3) rather than a plectrum... The strings of the <i>nebel</i> were made of thick gut and those of the <i>kinnor</i> of thin gut (Mishnah, <i>Qinnim</i> iii.6); the sound of the <i>nebel</i> could be loud and noisy (<i>Isaiah</i> xiv.11). Although the instrument has been widely interpreted as a harp, this theory is not supported by archaeological finds... In the present state of research, the hypothesis</p>	




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				<p>put forward by Bayer (1968) is convincing: the <i>nebel</i> was a local form of lyre that underwent very little Hellenization, and had a resonator resembling the kind of leather bag used to hold fluids; it produced a loud sound, had more and thicker strings than the <i>kinnor</i>, was played without a plectrum and served as a tenor or bass instrument.</p> <p>“Recently, a crucial proof of the interpretation of the biblical <i>nebel</i> as a lyre has come to light: a stone carving of the Roman period was discovered at Dion in Greece, showing the first instance of text and image side by side: a relief of a lyre next to the carved wording of a hymn of praise on the <i>nabla</i> (see Pandermalis, 1998; Yannou and others, 1998, p. 80).”</p> <p><i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, pp. 528-529.</p> <p>“All the evidence points to the <i>nebhel</i> having been the Assyrian harp, of which we have numerous examples in the ruins.” James Orr (ed.), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>, electronic ed. STEP Files, 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., “Music, III. Instruments 2. Strings (2) Materials (b) The <i>Nebhel</i>.”</p> <p>“From the fact that ‘nebel’ in Hebrew also signifies a wine bottle or skin, it has been conjectured that the term when applied to a musical instrument denotes a kind of BAGPIPE...One would not call a guitar by any term that connotes collapsing when not in use. But the Hebrew word ‘nebel’ perfectly fits the Scottish and Irish bagpipes...Who is more likely to have preserved the instruments and melodies of David’s Israelite surroundings than the traditional Israelites, such as the Scots, Welsh and Irish, who colonized Britain in the days of ancient Israel and preserved much of the form of Hebrew music?”</p> <p>“The Bible Answers Short Questions From Our Readers,” <i>The Plain Truth</i>, July 1967, pp. 15-16.</p>	
	harp	kinnor	H3658	<p>The <i>kinnor</i> “was a stringed instrument shaped like a harp (the Sea of Galilee has a similar shape and is often called Kinneret).</p>	<p>Genesis 4:21; 31:27; 1 Samuel 10:5;</p>

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S T R I N G				<p>The strings were made of stretched sheepgut. It was used in the Temple and festivities (Isaiah 5:12), to accompany prophecies (1 Chronicles 25:1), and to change moods (1 Samuel 16:23). We do not know the number of strings or whether a plectrum (pick) was used.</p>  <p>“Replica of a <i>kinnor</i> from Megiddo dating from <i>circa</i> 1200 B.C.” Ralph Gower, <i>The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times</i>, Moody Press, 1987, p. 306.</p> <p>“Although the Septuagint and the Vulgate show uncertainty regarding the translation of the term...and despite the centuries-old tradition of depicting, both in writing and iconography, the <i>kinnor</i> as the ‘harp of David,’ modern scholars are in no doubt that the instrument was in fact a lyre... confirmed by archaeological evidence: more than 30 depictions of lyres date from the period relevant to the biblical scriptures, while not a single find has been discovered relating to any other kind of string instrument.” <i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, pp. 526-527.</p> <p>“The kinnor (or so we are informed by Professor Lise Manniche) was not a native Egyptian instrument. Some early kinnorot portrayed and found in Egypt nevertheless seem more characteristically Egyptian in type, with horizontal crossbars and often heavy construction. Others reflect the typically lighter construction and slanted crossbars of the characteristically Semitic</p>	<p>16:16, 23; 1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:16, 21, 28; 16:5; 25:1, 3, 6; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 9:11; 20:28; 29:25; Nehemiah 12:27; Job 21:12; 30:31; Psalms 33:2; 43:4; 49:4; 57:8; 71:22; 81:2; 92:3; 98:5; 108:2; 137:2; 147:7; 149:3; 150:3; Isaiah 5:12; 16:11; 23:16; 24:8; 30:32; Ezekiel 26:13</p>

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				<p>type. These latter kinnorot appear later in Egyptian history, and were imported from Syria and the Levant. This change in style of instruments reflected a change in style of music, for the later instruments were capable of greater volume than the earlier ones.</p> <p>“Some of the preserved instruments had the bases of their soundboxes open, allowing more sound to escape; and other kinnorot used soundholes, like the mockup [shown on the Web site] (based on a six-stringed instrument from Deir el-Medineh, dating from ca. 1580 BC). This kinnor, given its slanted crossbar and light construction, reflected the typical Semitic rather than the typical Egyptian model.”</p> <p>From <a href="http://www.kingdavidsharp.com">www.kingdavidsharp.com</a>.</p> <p>“The kinnor, a stringed instrument similar to the Greek lyre, is...the musical instrument to which the Bible refers most often. Sometimes called David's harp, the kinnor is not a true harp. Unlike a harp, the kinnor had strings of even length...</p> <p>Musicians played the kinnor primarily in worship services, but also used it on state occasions. During times of mourning the instrument remained silent. The kinnor was popular among shepherds, which explains David's familiarity with the instrument.”</p> <p>“When a Harp Is Not a Harp,” <i>The Plain Truth</i>, April 1994, p. 28.</p> <p>“In the Septuagint and the Vulgate, the majority of the translations of <i>kinnor</i> are, respectively <i>kithara</i> and <i>cithara</i>, the interpretation probably being a lyre similar to the Greek instrument called <i>kithara</i>...It may thus be deduced that the quality of its tone was sweet and tender...probably cypress or sandalwood. There are various opinions concerning its shape and the number of strings...although the <i>kinnor</i> was used for accompaniment ‘it could be very eloquent when played alone, with the fingers of both hands sweeping the strings freely.’”</p> <p>Macy Nulman, <i>Concise Encyclopedia of Jewish Music</i>, McGraw-Hill, 1975, p. 134.</p>	
	harp (instrument)	(bekinnor benebel) asor	H6218	<p>‘The psaltery of ten strings’ is given as the rendering of Heb: <i>nebhel 'asor</i>; while...</p>	Psalms 33:2; 92:3; 144:9

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S T R I N G	of 10 strings			<p>Heb: 'asor is translated 'instrument of ten strings.' No doubt...there were harps of less and greater compass—the mention of the number of strings in two or three instances does not necessarily imply different kinds of harps.”</p> <p>James Orr (ed.), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>, electronic ed. STEP Files, 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., “Music, III. Instruments 2. Strings (2) Materials (b) The Nebhel.”</p> <p>“By abbreviation ten <i>strings</i>, and so a <i>decachord</i>:—(instrument of) ten (strings, -th).”</p> <p>James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible</i>, Macdonald Publishing Co., p. 92.</p>	
S T R I N G	harp	qiytharos	H7030	<p>“The Book of <i>Daniel</i>...contains a recurring phrase listing a group of musical instruments, often called the ‘Nebuchadnezzar orchestra,’ whose playing served as a signal for the worship of an idol to begin...The names are given in a mixture of Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew...The qaytros (from Gk. Kithara) belongs to the tradition of Babylonian military bands (lyres accompanied by drums and cymbals).”</p> <p><i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 532.</p> <p>“(Chaldee); Of Greek origin [H2788]; a <i>lyre</i>:—harp.”</p> <p>James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible</i>, Macdonald Publishing Co., p. 103.</p>	Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15
S T R I N G	harp	kithara	G2788	<p>“The <i>kithara</i>—a large lyre—may have acquired a new tonal quality at around this time as a result of changes in instrument-making...it is plausible that in the New Testament names of instruments ‘like <i>aulos</i>, <i>kithara</i> may have been used loosely to refer to more instruments of a general class’ (Smith, 1962).”</p> <p><i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 533.</p>	1 Corinthians 14:7; Revelation 5:8; 14:2; 15:2; 18:22

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				“Of uncertain affinity; a <i>lyre</i> :—harp.” James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament</i> , Macdonald Publishing Co., p. 42.	
S T R I N G	instruments	keliy	H3627	“In the NKJV the phrase ‘stringed instruments’ is often used to refer to all these instruments in a collective sense: harp, lute, lyre, psaltery...” <i>Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary</i> , Thomas Nelson, 1986, p. 736.	1 Chronicles 15:16; 16:42; 23:5; 2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:6; 23:13; 29:27; Nehemiah 12:36
S T R I N G	instrument	shaliysh	H7991	<p>“<i>Shalishim</i> occurs in 1 Sam 18:6, where it is rendered ‘instruments of music,’ the Revised Version margin ‘triangles, or three stringed instruments’... The word seems from the context to represent a musical instrument of some sort, but which is very uncertain.” James Orr (ed.), <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>, electronic ed. STEP Files, 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., “The Shalishim.”</p> <p>“Collective term... indicates the predominant place of stringed instruments... appear to refer to harps or lyres, in contrast to other priestly instruments such [as] trumpets or cymbals.” <i>Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible</i>, Vol. 3, “Musical Instruments” by E. Werner, Abington Press, 1962, p. 476.</p> <p>“Shalishim... has been the object of conjecture and speculation by Biblical commentators and scholars. (1) The Septuagint translates it by ‘cymbals.’ Rashi... and R. David Kimchi have the same view. “(2) The Vulgate gives <i>sistra</i> as its meaning. “(3) The marginal notation in the Authorized Version translates it as ‘three-stringed instruments,’ from the root <i>shalosh</i>, ‘three.’ Thus, some Biblical commentators have suggested ‘triangular harps’ or ‘three-stringed lutes.’ “(4) ... The instrument is a steel rod bent into an equilateral triangle, suspended on a thread, and struck with a metal stick.</p>	1 Samuel 18:6

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				<p>“(5) It has been defined as a dance, according to R. Yosef b. Shimon Kara...according to Curt Sachs, it is a dance with ‘three’ (participants).</p> <p>“(6) F.W. Galpin interprets it to mean a three-stringed instrument, probably the long necked guitar or <i>tamboura</i>.</p> <p>“(7) Some scholars render it ‘noble songs.’” Macy Nulman, <i>Concise Encyclopedia of Jewish Music</i>, McGraw-Hill, 1975, pp. 221-222.</p>	
S T R I N G	lyre (KJ sackbut)	sabbeka	H5443	<p>“The Book of <i>Daniel</i>...contains a recurring phrase listing a group of musical instruments, often called the ‘Nebuchadnezzar orchestra,’ whose playing served as a signal for the worship of an idol to begin...The names are given in a mixture of Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew...<i>Sabbekha</i> is a term of Greek origin...often identified as a lyre, Sach’s suggestion that it was a vertically-held angular harp (1940, p. 84) seems better founded.”</p> <p><i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 532.</p> <p>“(Chaldee); from a root corresponding to H5440; a <i>lyre</i>:—sackbut.”</p> <p>James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible</i>, Macdonald Publishing Co., p. 81.</p>	Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15
S T R I N G	psaltery	pesanteriyn	H6460	<p>“The Book of <i>Daniel</i>...contains a recurring phrase listing a group of musical instruments, often called the ‘Nebuchadnezzar orchestra,’ whose playing served as a signal for the worship of an idol to begin...The names are given in a mixture of Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew...The <i>pesanterin</i>...has been seen deriving from an ancient Greek harp-type instrument (Sach’s, 1940, p. 83), although Kolari (1947, p. 78) suggests that it was possibly a zither.”</p> <p><i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Vol. 3, “Biblical Instruments” by Joachim Braun, Macmillan Publishers, 2001, p. 532.</p> <p>“(Chaldee); a transliteration of the Greek (not in lexicon) <i>psalterion</i>; a <i>lyre</i>:—psaltery.”</p> <p>James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the</i></p>	Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15

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Type	Instrument (NKJ English)	Hebrew / Greek (transliterated)	Strong's Number	Definition	Relevant Scriptures
				<i>Words in the Hebrew Bible</i> , Macdonald Publishing Co., p. 95.	

**Appendix B—Index of Scriptures Referring to Music**

Genesis 4:21	1 Samuel 16:23	2 Chronicles 7:6
Genesis 31:27	1 Samuel 18:6-7	2 Chronicles 9:11
Exodus 15:1	1 Samuel 18:10	2 Chronicles 13:12
Exodus 15:2	1 Samuel 19:9	2 Chronicles 13:14
Exodus 15: 20	1 Samuel 21:11	2 Chronicles 15:14
Exodus 15:21	1 Samuel 29:5	2 Chronicles 20:21-22
Exodus 19:13	1 Samuel 30:16	2 Chronicles 20:28
Exodus 19:16	2 Samuel 2:28	2 Chronicles 23:13
Exodus 19:19	2 Samuel 6:5	2 Chronicles 23:18
Exodus 20:18	2 Samuel 6:14-16	2 Chronicles 29:25-28
Exodus 32:18	2 Samuel 6:21	2 Chronicles 29:30
Exodus 32:19	2 Samuel 15:10	2 Chronicles 30:21
Leviticus 23:24	2 Samuel 18:16	2 Chronicles 34:12
Leviticus 25:9	2 Samuel 19:35	2 Chronicles 35:15
Numbers 10:2-10	2 Samuel 20:1	2 Chronicles 35:25
Numbers 21:17	2 Samuel 20:22	Ezra 2:41
Numbers 29:1	2 Samuel 22:1	Ezra 2:65
Numbers 31:6	2 Samuel 22:50	Ezra 2:70
Deuteronomy 31:19	2 Samuel 23:1	Ezra 3:10-11
Deuteronomy 31:21	1 Kings 1:34	Ezra 7:7
Deuteronomy 31:22	1 Kings 1:39-41	Ezra 7:24
Deuteronomy 31:30	1 Kings 4:32	Ezra 10:24
Deuteronomy 32:44	1 Kings 10:12	Nehemiah 4:18
Joshua 6:4-6	2 Kings 3:15	Nehemiah 4:20
Joshua 6:8-9	2 Kings 9:13	Nehemiah 7:1
Joshua 6:13	2 Kings 11:14	Nehemiah 7:44
Joshua 6:16	2 Kings 12:13	Nehemiah 7:67
Joshua 6:20	1 Chronicles 6:31-33	Nehemiah 7:73
Judges 3:27	1 Chronicles 9:33	Nehemiah 10:28
Judges 5:1	1 Chronicles 13:8	Nehemiah 10:39
Judges 5:3	1 Chronicles 15:16	Nehemiah 11:22-23
Judges 5:12	1 Chronicles 15:19-22	Nehemiah 12:27-29
Judges 6:34	1 Chronicles 15:24	Nehemiah 12:31
Judges 7:8	1 Chronicles 15:27-29	Nehemiah 12:35-36
Judges 7:16	1 Chronicles 16:5-7	Nehemiah 12:38
Judges 7:18-20	1 Chronicles 16:9	Nehemiah 12:40-42
Judges 7:22	1 Chronicles 16:23	Nehemiah 12:45-47
Judges 11:34	1 Chronicles 16:42	Nehemiah 13:5
Judges 21:21	1 Chronicles 23:5	Nehemiah 13:10
Judges 21:23	1 Chronicles 25:1	Job 21:11-12
1 Samuel 10:5	1 Chronicles 25:3	Job 29:13
1 Samuel 13:3	1 Chronicles 25:5-7	Job 30:9
1 Samuel 16:16-18	2 Chronicles 5:12-13	Job 30:31



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Job 35:10	Psalms 33:2-3	Psalms 61 (Title)
Job 36:24	Psalms 36 (Title)	Psalms 61:8
Job 38:7	Psalms 39 (Title)	Psalms 62 (Title)
Job 39:24-25	Psalms 39:5	Psalms 62:4
Psalms 3 Title (used 57 times in Psalms)	Psalms 39:11	Psalms 62:8
Psalms 3:2 (Selah: used 71 times in Psalms)	Psalms 40 (Title)	Psalms 64 (Title)
Psalms 3:4	Psalms 40:3	Psalms 65 (Title)
Psalms 3:8	Psalms 41 (Title)	Psalms 65:13
Psalms 4 (Title)	Psalms 42 Title	Psalms 66 (Title)
Psalms 5 (Title)	Psalms 42:8	Psalms 66:2
Psalms 6 (Title)	Psalms 43:4	Psalms 66:7
Psalms 7 (Title)	Psalms 44 (Title)	Psalms 66:15
Psalms 7:5	Psalms 44:8	Psalms 67 (Title)
Psalms 7:17	Psalms 45 (Title)	Psalms 67:4
Psalms 8 (Title)	Psalms 46 (Title)	Psalms 68 (Title)
Psalms 9 (Title)	Psalms 46:3	Psalms 68:4
Psalms 9:2	Psalms 46:7	Psalms 68:7
Psalms 9:11	Psalms 46:11	Psalms 68:19
Psalms 9:16	Psalms 47 (Title)	Psalms 68:25
Psalms 9:20	Psalms 47:4-7	Psalms 68:32
Psalms 11 (Title)	Psalms 48 (Title)	Psalms 69 (Title)
Psalms 12 (Title)	Psalms 48:8	Psalms 69:12
Psalms 13 (Title)	Psalms 49 (Title)	Psalms 69:30
Psalms 13:6	Psalms 49:4	Psalms 70 (Title)
Psalms 14 (Title)	Psalms 49:13	Psalms 71:22-23
Psalms 18 (Title)	Psalms 49:15	Psalms 75 (Title)
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Psalms 19 (Title)	Psalms 51 (Title)	Psalms 75:9
Psalms 20 (Title)	Psalms 51:14	Psalms 76 (Title)
Psalms 20:3	Psalms 52 (Title)	Psalms 76:3
Psalms 21 (Title)	Psalms 52:3	Psalms 76:9
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Psalms 21:13	Psalms 53 (Title)	Psalms 77:3
Psalms 22 (Title)	Psalms 54 (Title)	Psalms 77:6
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Psalms 27:6	Psalms 55:7	Psalms 80 (Title)
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Psalms 30 (Title)	Psalms 56 (Title)	Psalms 81:1-3
Psalms 30:4	Psalms 57 (Title)	Psalms 81:7
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Psalms 87 (Title)	Psalms 135:3	Isaiah 35:2
Psalms 87:3	Psalms 137:2-4	Isaiah 35:6
Psalms 87:6-7	Psalms 138:1	Isaiah 35:10
Psalms 88 (Title)	Psalms 138:5	Isaiah 38:20
Psalms 88:7	Psalms 139 (Title)	Isaiah 42:10-11
Psalms 88:10	Psalms 140 (Title)	Isaiah 44:23
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Psalms 89:4	Psalms 140:5	Isaiah 49:13
Psalms 89:15	Psalms 140:8	Isaiah 51:3
Psalms 89:37	Psalms 143:6	Isaiah 51:11
Psalms 89:45	Psalms 144:9	Isaiah 52:8-9
Psalms 89:48	Psalms 145:7	Isaiah 54:1
Psalms 92 (Title)	Psalms 146:2	Isaiah 55:12
Psalms 92:1	Psalms 147:1	Isaiah 58:1
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Psalms 95:1-2	Psalms 149:1	Jeremiah 4:5
Psalms 96:1-2	Psalms 149:3	Jeremiah 4:19
Psalms 98:1	Psalms 149:5	Jeremiah 4:21
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Psalms 100:2	Proverbs 25:20	Jeremiah 6:17
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Psalms 104:12	Ecclesiastes 2:8	Jeremiah 31:4
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Psalms 109 (Title)	Isaiah 5:1	Jeremiah 51:48
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Psalms 119:54	Isaiah 12:2	Lamentations 3:63
Psalms 120 (Title)	Isaiah 12:5	Lamentations 5:14-15
Psalms 121 (Title)	Isaiah 14:7	Ezekiel 7:14
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Psalms 123 (Title)	Isaiah 16:10-11	Ezekiel 28:13
Psalms 124 (Title)	Isaiah 18:3	Ezekiel 33:3-6
Psalms 125 (Title)	Isaiah 23:15-16	Ezekiel 33:32
Psalms 126 (Title)	Isaiah 24:8-9	Ezekiel 40:44
Psalms 126:2	Isaiah 24:14	Daniel 3:5
Psalms 127 (Title)	Isaiah 24:16	Daniel 3:7
Psalms 128 (Title)	Isaiah 25:5	Daniel 3:10
Psalms 129 (Title)	Isaiah 26:1	Daniel 3:15
Psalms 130 (Title)	Isaiah 26:19	Daniel 6:18
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Psalms 132 (Title)	Isaiah 27:13	Hosea 5:8

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Hosea 8:1	Matthew 6:2	1 Thessalonians 4:16
Joel 2:1	Matthew 9:23	Hebrews 2:12
Joel 2:15	Matthew 11:17	Hebrews 12:19
Amos 2:2	Matthew 14:6	James 5:13
Amos 3:6	Matthew 24:31	Revelation 1:10
Amos 5:23	Matthew 26:30	Revelation 4:1
Amos 6:5	Mark 6:22	Revelation 5:8-9
Amos 8:3	Mark 14:26	Revelation 8:2
Amos 8:10	Luke 7:32	Revelation 8:6-8
Habakkuk 3:3	Luke 15:25	Revelation 8:10
Habakkuk 3:9	Acts 16:25	Revelation 8:12-13
Habakkuk 3:13	Romans 15:9	Revelation 9:1
Habakkuk 3:19	1 Corinthians 13:1	Revelation 9:13-14
Zephaniah 1:16	1 Corinthians 14:7-8	Revelation 10:7
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Zephaniah 3:14	1 Corinthians 14:26	Revelation 14:2-3
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