

Music in Worship – Lesson 7

Music in Worship?

- Clarifications
- Up to this point, I have assumed that music is a part of our gathered worship. But is it? What justification do we have for understanding singing as a part of our assembled worship? There are only six passages in the New Testament that directly speak of music in the congregation. These passages either command the use of music in the gathered church or assume its use.
 - Matthew 26:29-30 & Mark 14:25-26

 - 1 Corinthians 14:13-19, 26

 - Ephesians 5:19-20

 - Colossians 3:16-17

 - Revelation 5:9-10?
- These six passages show that singing as part of the worship of the local church is both expected and commanded. So then, singing is legitimately part of our gathered worship. But what songs are we to sing? Some in the past and to this day argue that we are only commanded to sing inspired words, primarily the Psalms, and therefore, it is wrong to sing uninspired songs. This view is known as exclusive psalmody.
 - First, those who hold to exclusive psalmody are inconsistent; they sing translations of the Psalms. Translations are not inspired. (Compare with our Articles of Faith, Section 1, paragraphs B & C.)
 - Second, this view requires that every New Testament reference to the singing of the Church be a reference to singing the Psalms or other inspired songs. However, this cannot be shown to be the case.

- Matthew 26:30 & Mark 14:26
 - The word that is here translated hymn is *hymneō*. It occurs only 4 times in the New Testament, twice in our passages, once in Acts 16:25 (Paul & Silas sing a song while in prison), and once in Heb 2:12 which is a direct quote from Psalm 22:22.
 - Further, we almost certainly know what song Jesus & his disciples sang; one of the Hallel Psalms (113-118), probably Psalm 118.
 - 1 Corinthians 14:15, 26
 - Here, we are again not explicitly told what is being sung. However, the word translated hymn in v26 is the Greek word for Psalm. Most translations translate it as psalm.
 - Ephesians 5:19 & Colossians 3:16
 - While those who hold to exclusive psalmody argue that all three words used here refer to specific psalms in the OT psalter, that is not the case.
 - First, look at the context. Paul is writing, not to Jews, but to primarily Gentiles churches. If Paul is referring exclusively to various Psalms, how on earth are these Gentile Christians supposed to know that?
 - Secondly, if Paul intended only to refer to the OT Psalter, why did he use three words when one would have been perfectly clear? The believers in Ephesus & Colosseae would have understood each word as referencing something distinct.
- We are to sing as part of our gathered worship. It is both expected and commanded.
 - We are commanded to sing not just the Psalms, but also “hymns and spiritual songs.”

Latin Plainsong – AD 476-814

- Fall of the Western Roman Empire – 476
 - Traditional date for the fall of the Western half of the Roman Empire
 - Marks the beginning of the Middle Ages
- Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunantus (ca. 530-609)
 - Born in Italy but settled in Gaul (France) where he became Bishop of Poitiers ca AD 600.
 - Is said to have written a cycle of songs – Hymns for All the Festivals of the Christian Year
 - “Welcome, Happy Morning”
- Gregory I (540-604, Pope 590-604)
 - Founded the Benedictine Order
 - Traditionally credited with codifying Latin chant into a distinct repertory though this was probably actually done by Gregory II (669-731). We call this repertory and the songs that mimicked its style Gregorian Chant.

- Gregorian Chant
 - Monophonic, unaccompanied, non-metrical tunes which placed the musical stresses on the stresses of the text
 - These chants are also known as plainsong
 - Were the accepted norm for Western Christian music for around 200-300 years
- The Venerable Bede (673-735)
 - British monk in the Benedictine Order
 - One of the greatest writers and teachers of the early Middle Ages. He was a theologian, historian, chronologist (calculated dates), and poet.
 - Devised a new calculation of the age of the world (3952 BC) for which he was accused of heresy though he was never formally charged.
 - “Ecclesiastical History of English Nation”
 - “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing”
- “Christ is Made the Sure Foundation”
 - Anonymous Latin hymn from the 6th or 7th centuries
 - Traditionally sung at the dedication of church buildings
 - Possible drawn from Ephesians 2:20-22 and I Peter 2:4-7
- Charlemagne (748-814)
 - Frankish king who united much of western and central Europe
 - Crowned Holy Roman Emperor in AD 800
- Theodulph of Orleans (ca 760-821)
 - A poet and counselor in Charlemagne’s court
 - Was made Bishop of Orleans after Charlemagne recognized his abilities
 - Composed many hymns and poems of which 80 remain in existence
 - “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”
- Rabanus Maurus (776-856)
 - Frankish Benedictine monk
 - Theologian, encyclopedist, military theorist, poet
 - Became the Archbishop of Mainz
 - Credited with writing Veni, Creator Spiritus – “Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire”