

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #8

AREN'T MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC FOUND IN HEAVEN?

The argument is often made that since mechanical instruments of music are found in heaven, they may also be used in the church today.

The text referred to is Revelation 14:2 where we read, “*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.*”

There are two major problems with this argument:

1) The book of Revelation is written in figurative language — signs and symbols (Rev. 1:1). Chapter 5 verse 8 mentions harps and bowls full of incense (prayers). If the harps are literal/material, then why not the bowls of prayers? By what reasoning or logic can you make harps literal and bowls figurative? Chapter 14 verse 2 mentions “*many waters,*” “*great thunder*” and “*harpers harping with their harps.*” Will there be “*many waters*” and “*great thunder*” in heaven? These things are properly understood to be figurative and not literal. By what reasoning then, can you make the waters and thunder figurative but the harps literal?

Notice that the verse says a VOICE was heard from heaven. The VOICE (or sound) was AS the voice of many

waters and AS the voice of great thunder and AS the voice of harpers (*American Standard Version*). Literal waters, thunder and harpers were not heard, but a SOUND AS or LIKE many waters, thunder and harpers.

According to First Corinthians 15:50, flesh and blood cannot enter heaven. Since that’s the case, what possible use do spiritual beings have with literal/material harps? The point of the passage is that John heard a sound — a new song (verse 3). The rhythm of the song was AS if it were many waters. The volume of the song was AS if it were great thunder. The melody of it was AS if it were harpers harping with their harps.

This passage, upon investigation, does not place instruments in heaven.

2) Even if it could be proved there will be literal/material mechanical instruments of music in heaven, what does that have to do with worship in the church today? The fact is, what God may have allowed in the Old Testament or what God may allow in heaven does not authorize what is to be done in the church now. If so, how? To run to the “Old Testament” or to run to “heaven,” simply proves there is no authority for their use or practice in the New Testament church!

Why not study these things carefully and respect God’s Word.

—Garland M. Robinson