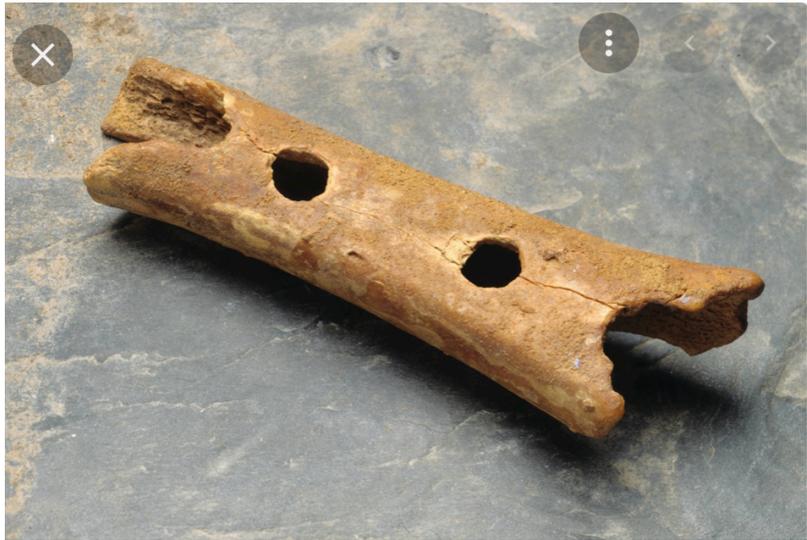


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As long as humans inhabit this earth...there will be music. It is part of our DNA. It is the backbone of worship whether we worship Jesus, Buddha, or mother earth. As long as there is a need to communicate, celebrate, worship, sooth, alert, herd, mourn etc.,...there will be music. After all, we didn't invent music and song, God did with the songbirds, the call of wild animals, the purring of cat, the bubbling brook, or the rhythmic pecking of the woodpecker. As long God's Creation survives...there will be music.

In discussing musical instruments of old (including voice), there are four broad categories that describe musical instrument types;

- Chordophones - - Stringed instruments that require plucking or strumming like a harp,
- Aerophones - - Instruments that require the user to blow into or across a hole like the flute or horn,
- Membranophones - - instruments that must be struck like a drum or rung like a bell, and
- Voice or pattered sound using the other three kinds of instruments.



The oldest musical instrument in the world is, a 60,000-year-old Neanderthal flute; a treasure of global significance. It was discovered in a cave near Cercko (i.e., Slovenia) and has been declared by experts to have been made by Neanderthals. It is made from the left thighbone of a young cave bear and has four pierced holes.

The oldest trumpets are shown below and are part of the treasures in King Tut's tomb. The pair of trumpets from Pharaoh Tutankhamun's tomb are believed to be the oldest playable trumpets in the world. These trumpets are the only ones that have survived from ancient Egypt and are over 3,400 years old. They were discovered in 1922 by archaeologist Howard Carter during an excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb. Both trumpets feature finely engraved decorative images of the god Ra-Horakhty, Ptah, and Amun. In 1939, the trumpets were played before a live audience and the performance was broadcast internationally through BBC radio.



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Music of the Ancients (Mesopotamia)

The music roots or heritage of the Hebrews comes from the Ancient Near East (or ANE) and primarily Mesopotamia (the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers) and Egypt. This includes groups such as the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Chaldeans to name a few. We are fortunate to benefit from these cultures because they have long and well documented histories and archaeological activity has been going on for 150 years or more. Initially, the creation of musical instruments and music was to pay homage to a deity(s) or support/enhance religious rites and practices.

However, over time music became more a part of people's daily lives. The instruments were also becoming more sophisticated. This trend is beautifully illustrated by the Golden or Bull Lyre of Ur from the tomb of Queen Puabi (ca 2600 to 2500 BC). There are early Mesopotamian texts that "discuss musical performance by different cultures, and some give descriptions of musical "superstars" of their time (e.g., Shulgi, son of Ur-Nammu (2094 - 2047 BC))".



Archaeologists have discovered several tablets dating back to the third millennium with what appears to be musical notation. They have also found a mathematical tablet from

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the same era “that provides insights into the levels of sophistication in Mesopotamian music. Experts used these musical notations plus the mathematical text to decipher a Ugarit musical hymn called “[The Hurrian Cult Song](#)” from about 1400 BC. The importance and prominence of music and musical instruments in the ANE culture is supported by their art. Some of this art is as late as the Babylonian and Assyrian art created during the Biblical Period of roughly 1400 to 586 BC (e.g. see stonework to the right.)



(NOTE: You can listen to this ancient song by typing the song title above into Google and activate the link.)

Music of the Ancients (Egypt)

Egypt’s musical heritage, and history goes back even farther in time to their inception. Key musical instruments for the “Old Kingdoms” (e.g., early Dynasties) or about 5,100 years ago). The primary instruments from these ancient times include the “nay” or aerophone “blown pipe played at an oblique angle.” Other instruments included, “oboe, harps, lyres, clappers, symbols, and various types of drums.” It appears that these instruments were played in a variety of combinations.

Music of the Ancients (Israel)

Music was a vital part of Israel’s heritage and culture. The earliest mention we have in the Old Testament (OT) is Genesis 4:20-21 where Jabal was designated the father of those “who live in tents and raise livestock.” His brother Jubal was named “the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes.” Throughout their history, the Hebrew people have employed music to celebrate victories, mourn, sooth anxiety and worry, facilitate prophecy, entertain, dance, worship, etc. They employed a number of instruments that are described below and a variety of uses as will be discussed later.

It should also be pointed out that some of the songs predate David and Solomon and later



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hymn writers. For example, the “Song of Moses and Miriam” celebrating the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian arm was sung in the 1400 to 1200 BC timeframe. Likewise, the Song of Deborah was written during the period of the Judges.

Old Testament Instruments

1. Bell(s) - - Bells are mentioned 7 times in the OT including Exodus 28:33-34 and again in 39:25-26. A bell consisted of a hollow open-ended body, usually of metal with a clapper inside. Bells made of gold were fastened to the lower hem of Aaron’s robe: “a golden bell and a pomegranate alternating all around the low hem of the robe.”
2. Castanets - - Castanets are mentioned once in the OT in 2 Samuel 6:5; however, a more accurate definition is “clay rattle.” The archaeological clay rattle is the most verified sound tool in the Levant archaeological region where more than 100 items have been dated to this age.
3. Cymbals - - Cymbals are mentioned in 15 OT verses. They are a form of clapper made of copper or brass and consisting of two plates with concave centers. Examples of Cymbal use includes 2 Samuel 6:5, 1 Chronicles 13:8, 15:16, 2 Chronicles 5:12-13, Ezra 3:10, Nehemiah 12:27, and Psalms 150:5. Cymbals were known from the late Sumerian culture of about 2000 BC.
4. Drum - - The translation of the Hebrew word as “drum” is under much dispute. Daniel 3:5-15 is the only place where the NRSV translated it as “drum.” Other translations use “pipe,” “dulcimer,” and “double-flute. It is a musical instrument in Nebuchadnezzar’s band. It may mean or refer to “consonant harmony” or “making music in consort”
5. Flute - - The term flute is found in 1 Samuel 10:5, Isaiah 5:12, and 30:29, and Jeremiah 48:36 and is probably better translated as a “pipe” since it was a “tube” instrument and not a “reed” instrument.
6. Harp - - The harp found in 19 OT references in the NIV including 1 Kings 10:12, 1 Chronicles 13:8, 2 Chronicles 5:12, Nehemiah 12:27, Psalms 49:4, Isaiah 5:12, 14:11, and 23:16, Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, and 15. 1 Kings 10:12 gives us some additional information in that during the reign of Solomon, King Hiram imported great quantities of “almugwood” or “sandalwood” used by Hiram to make supports for the temple and for the royal palace and “harps and lyres for the musicians.”
7. Horn - - Horns are mentioned in Joshua 6:4-6, 8, 1 Chronicles 15:28, 2 Chronicles 15:14, Psalms 98:6, Daniel 3:7, 10, and 15, and Hosea 5:8. The term means either “animal horn” or “ram’s” horn and is used as “horn of oil” in anointing the next king.
8. Lute - - Lute can be found in Psalms 92:3 and 150:3 in some translations. The archaeological record between the 11th Century BC and 2nd Century BC does not show any “lutes” present in Israel. Some translations translate the term “lyre” and not “lute.”
9. Lyre - - The NIV has 20 references to the “lyre” in Genesis 4:21, 1 Samuel 10:5 and 18:10, 2 Samuel 6:5, Nehemiah 12:27, Job 21:12, and Daniel 3:5-15 as well as others. Again, there is confusion and uncertainty on the meaning of the term. However, coins from the Hellenistic/Roman times show two Lyre...a larger type with 5 to 8 strings and a smaller one with 3 to 5 strings and more elaborate.

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10. Pipe - - The term “pipe” is found in Genesis 4:21, 1 Kings 1:40, Job 21:12, and 30:31, Psalms 150:4, Dan 3:5, 7, 10, and 15. There is still uncertainty as to the actual meaning of this term and is sometime translated as “pipe.”
11. Tambourine/timbrel - - This term is found in Genesis 31:27, 2 Samuel 6:5, 1 Chronicles 13:8, Job 21:12, Psalms 81:2, and Isaiah 5:12 24:8 and 30:32. The “tambourine” became one of the most popular musical instruments, accompanying singing and beating the rhythm for dance. It was primarily women playing the tambourine and, in fact, some current cultures such as Yemenite women continue the tradition.
12. Trigon - - Found only in Daniel 3:5-15. The term is often identified as a “lyre.” This is complicated by the fact that Daniel is referring to a Babylonian musical band and instruments.
13. Trumpet Including the Shofar and the Salpinx) - - This instrument has many references including Exodus 19:16, Numbers: 2-10, Samuel 13:3, 1 Kings 1:34-41, Ezekiel 33:3-6, and Joel 2:1. In nearly all OT occurrences the “shofar” appears as a solo instrument, reflecting its unique position in the biblical world of sound. The “shofar” was limited to two or three strong tones used to raise an alarm, scare the enemy, evoke a magical atmosphere, and announce the Sabbath and the new moon.

(NOTE: There is also some confusion in translating musical types. For example, “flute,” “lute,” and “lyre” all use the same root Hebrew words. Just like musical labels and terms for the Psalms are often unknown, so it is with types of musical instruments. Many translations now use the word “pipe” to mean flute, lute, or lyre.)

New Testament

1. Bugle - - Apparently an obsolete translation coming from the 13th Century AD meaning “animal horn.” The term is used only once in the NT in 1 Corinthians 14:8.
2. Cymbal - - A musical item not necessarily revered in the NT (see 1 Corinthians 13:1).
3. Flute - - A popular Greek and Roman double reed instrument used in laments for the dead (Matthew 11:17), weddings (Matthew 9:23), and used metaphorically to refer to instrument in general (Revelation 18:22).
4. Gong - - A term used metaphorically by Paul (1 Corinthians 13:1) but also a resonating brass vase used in Greek amphitheaters to resonate certain pitches of singing voices (i.e., an acoustic amplification).
5. Harp - - Used symbolically three times in the NT in 1 Corinthians 14:7, Revelation 5:2, and Revelation 5:8.
6. Trumpet - - Used 17 times in the NT and usually for signaling and communication (e.g., Matthew 24:31, 1 Corinthians 14:8, Hebrews 12:19, and Revelation 1:10).

It is tragic but many of the artifacts from the Hebrew world were destroyed during the conquest of the Northern tribes in 722 BC by the Assyrians and Judah or the Southern Kingdom by the Babylonians in 586 BC. In addition, the Temple was destroyed as a result of the Babylonian conquest and genealogy records and artifacts such as musical instruments destroyed. It also appears that the Jews in captivity ceased to sing and play instruments as a means of national mourning (Psalms 137:1-4). This once again

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changed with the return of the exiles from Babylon and rebuilding and dedication of the Temple. So by the time of Jesus, Paul, and the Disciples, music was once again a vital part of Temple and synagogue worship.

The Uses of Music in the Bible

Music, song, and dance are critical parts of our history, our DNA, our hope, our worship, and our well being. It is first mentioned in Genesis 4:20-21. The words and performance for early songs was often in the form of a chant. The first peoples to work out a system of that conveys pitches and timing were the Mesopotamians. Seven percent of the OT or 150 Psalms were written by David, Moses (3), Asaph (20), sons of Korah (10), Solomon (2), Herman (1) and Ethan (1). David was the “sweet psalmist of Israel (2 Samuel 23:1), the official musician in Saul’s court (1 Samuel 16:14-23), and organized the Levitical musicians (1 Chronicles 15:6 and 23:5). He also led the song and dancing that accompanied the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. In addition, David’s son Solomon is credited in 1 Kings 4:32) with writing 1005 additional songs. Women played a strong role in the music, poetry, and dance of Israel including Deborah, Miriam, Hannah, and Jephthah’s daughter (Judges 11:34). Miriam and Jephthah’s daughter also led Israel’s victories with timbrels and dance.

Other uses of Music from the Old and New Testaments include:

- Send-off’s (Genesis 31:27)
- Victories (1 Samuel 18:6 and Exodus 15:1-18)
- Singing and rejoicing while you work (Isaiah 16 and Jeremiah 48:33)
- Coronations (1 King 1:39-40)
- Calming King Saul’s demonic attacks (1 Samuel 16:14-23)
- Battle tactics like destroying the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:4)
- A catalyst for God’s guidance to Elisha (2 Kings 3:14-15)
- A catalyst for a prophetic atmosphere (1 Samuel 10:5-6)
- Benedictions (Mathew 26:29-30 and Mark 14;26)
- Mourning (Matthew 9:23)
- Celebration (Luke 15:25)
- Christian gatherings (Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16)
- Christian living (James 5:13)

Sacred Music

So what has happened in the last 2100 years relative to the music of the church? How have culture and worship adapted to change. How were questions about Scripture-based hymns verses Psalter-only hymns resolved?

The First 1500 Years

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The early church had to struggle with the same things we struggle with today. The “heretics” discovered the power of new compositions and they gained popularity quickly. John Chrysostom, “countered the heretics in his city by having the believers sing some popular songs with orthodox theology while marching in procession. Augustine, reacted to these new composition with suspicion and legalism.

In an effort to preserve the orthodox faith, the church began to limit all non-scriptural compositions. In fact as early as A. D. 343, the Synod of Laodicea forbade “the singing of uninspired hymns in Church,

Ultimately, the Catholic Church adopted the Gregorian Chant which are based upon the Psalms. The early Church leaders thought that if no one wrote or read or sang anything that was not directly Scripture, they would eliminate doctrinal error in song. Then along came Martin Luther and the Reformation and the “reformers” and the respective leaders began to change the musical landscape. The leaders are highlighted below.

The Next 600 Years

Martin Luther - - Martin Luther's core goal was to use the vernacular or the language and dialect of the people. He wanted the people to read their Bible, sing songs in their own tongue, and be a part of the “priesthood of believers.” He did not, however, condone minimizing the use of Psalms in worship and music. He also believed that when Paul used “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,” he was giving the Church permission to freely compose new songs.

John Calvin - - Calvin, unlike Luther, did not desire to reform the church; he desired to restore the primitive church as it had originally been. Calvin being more conservative in his approach concluded that the Old Testament Psalms were the only permissible source of church singing. Where he differed from the Catholic Church was that he encouraged the congregation to sing the hymns as opposed to the Clergy and he avoided those Roman chants that were not based on the Psalms.

Isaac Watts - - Isaac Watt's perspective on singing the Psalms was different than Calvin's perspective. Watts maintained that we are not under obligation to God or “Christian prudence” to sing the Bible. Watts believed that church hymns should not simply be the Word of God, but should be the Church's response to the Word. Secondly, Watts believed that the Book of Psalms was for the Jew's and that the Psalms needed to be retuned and revamped for Christians.

John and Charles Wesley - - The Wesleys represent the next big move in Christian music. They were Arminians and not Calvinists and grounded in “free will” with regard to salvation. The Wesleys believed as Luther did in doing hymns in the vernacular. They were also out to “shake the sleepy Church of England” into revival, The old forms which came from the Church were no longer adequate to carry the power of their call.” The Wesleys created music for the people. They were a part of the great revival movement and authors of some of the earliest invitation songs. Between them, they authored over 6,000 hymns.

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Sankey and Bliss - - The latter half of the 19th century in Americas was the era of great “mass evangelistic meetings.” During that time the gospel song became a popular vehicle for presenting the Good News about Jesus. Gospel songs are subjective songs emphasizing human experience and testimony. They are usually directed to the unbeliever and press for a decision from him. Their music is consciously the simple, sizable music of the world. Usually they have a refrain. The texts are strongly evangelistic sermons set to rhyme. Ira Sankey and Phillip Bliss seem to have been a rallying point for evangelical Christian music. Ira Sankey put many of the lyrics written by Fanny Crosby to song.

What's Next? - - It is difficult to see where we are headed relative to hymnology. The “mass evangelistic meetings” appear to have lasted up until about the 1970's. One current observation is that Christian songwriters seem to be creating intimate songs that were designed for the common use of both believers and seekers alike. Concurrent with the emergence of Christian Rock bands is the music and lyrics of the Billy Graham era. Key figures in perpetuating this music genre are Bill and Gloria Gaither and the Gaither Vocal Band. So where will sacred music end up?...Stay tuned!

Sample song titles for each of the above periods are included in pages 9 and 10 of this lesson.

HYMNS BY MARTIN LUTHER

- “All Praise to Thee, Eternal God” (Christmas)
- “Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands” (Easter)
- “Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord (Pentecost)
- “Lord, Keep us Steadfast in Thy word” (Reformation)
- “From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee” (Confession)
- “May God Bestow on Us His Grace (Mission Work)

JOHN CALVIN AND MUSIC

Calvin is not known for writing hymns. His focus was on theology, using the Psalms as the basis for Hymns, and encouraging congregational singing as opposed to clergy only.

HYMNS BY ISAAC WATTS

- “Alas and Did My Savior Bleed”
- “Am I a Soldier of the Cross”
- “At The Cross”
- “Give To Our God Immortal Praise”
- “How Sweet and Awful is the Place”
- “I Sing the Mighty Power of God”
- “Jesus Shall Reign”

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- “Joy to the World”
- “Our God Our Help in Ages Past”
- “We’re Marching to Zion”
- “When I Survey The Wondrous Cross”

HYMNS BY JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

- “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,”
- “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,”
- “Christ the Lord Is Ris'n Today,”
- “Soldiers of Christ, Arise,”
- “Rejoice, the Lord Is King,
- “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus ”
- “Jesu, Lover of My Soul.”
- “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

HYMNS BY IRA SANKEY OR P. P. BLISS

- “Tell Me The Story of Jesus?”
- “Am I a Soldier of the Cross?”
- “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”
- “God Will Take Care of You”
- “Onward Christian Soldier”
- “Man of Sorrows, What a Name”
- “Jesus I my Cross have Taken”
- “Take My Life and Let It Be”

SONGS WRITTEN AND/OR PERFORMED BY THE GAITHERS

- “Because He Lives”
- “I Stand Amazed”
- “He Touched Me”
- “His Eye Is On The Sparrow”
- “Mary Did You Know”
- “How Great Thou Art”
- “Shall We Gather At The River”
- “Somebody Touched God For Me”
- “I Believe In A Hill Called Mount Calvary”

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