

HABITATIONS OF PRAISE

“The Use of the Hands: Play Instruments!”

Part I - Strings

Ps 150:1-6 NIV

- 1 Praise the LORD [**hallelujah**]. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.
- 2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.
- 3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,
- 4 praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute,
- 5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.
- 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD [**hallelujah**]. Praise the LORD [**hallelujah**].

No real, valid argument can be made against the use of instruments in praising God. The 150th Psalm is like a praise manifesto, capsulating the heart of worship expressed throughout the entire psalms, “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.” The psalm has within it four distinct factors. It tells believers:

- ◆ Where to praise the Lord: in His sanctuary and the expanse of the universe (vs. 1).
- ◆ Why we praise the Lord: because of His mighty acts and greatness (vs. 2).
- ◆ How to praise the Lord: with full orchestral sound and dancing (vv. 3-5).
- ◆ Who is to praise the Lord: everything that has breath (vs. 6).

Here’s the thing, though, we who are living are to praise Him who gives us breath with inanimate objects: trumpets, harps, lyres, tambourines, strings, flutes, and cymbals!

1 Cor 14:7 “Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp,” NIV

Luke 19:40 "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." NIV

In a sense, the playing of musical instruments is like making the stones cry out in praise to God. Ernest Gentile, in his book Worship God!, puts it this way:

“When a musician in a church service takes inanimate objects (plastic, wood, wire, metal) and causes them to make sounds to the glory of God, he prophetically portends how the church will be the instrument of God that will release all creation to an unrestrained praise of God. Using inanimate objects now in the praising of God points to the coming eternity when bondages and restraints will no longer exist.”¹

As we have already seen, instrumentalists were integral in the worship at the tabernacle of David.

1 Chron 23:5b

4,000 were praising the LORD with the instruments which David made for giving praise. NASU

¹ Ernest Gentile, *Worship God!*, Bible Temple Publishing, Portland, Oregon, 1994, p. 180

1 Chron 15:16

David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brothers as singers to sing joyful songs, accompanied by musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals. NIV

1 Chron 16:4-6

4 He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to make petition, to give thanks, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel:

5 Asaph was the chief, Zechariah second, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. They were to play the lyres and harps, Asaph was to sound the cymbals,

6 and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. NIV

1 Chron 16:41-42

41 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;

42 and with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. NKJV

2 Chron 7:6

The priests took their positions, as did the Levites with the LORD's musical instruments, which King David had made for praising the LORD and which were used when he gave thanks, saying, "His love endures forever." Opposite the Levites, the priests blew their trumpets, and all the Israelites were standing. NIV

*The playing of instruments in praise to God was **the** major innovation made by David in the worship of Yaweh. Instruments had been played before, but never with the variety and constancy as dictated by David for his tabernacle and instituted by Solomon in the Temple. From that time forward, revivals were always marked by a return to the instrumentation of David.*

2 Chron 34:8-13

8 In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, to purify the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah and Maaseiah the ruler of the city, with Joah son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the temple of the LORD his God.

9 They went to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the temple of God, which the Levites who were the doorkeepers had collected from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim and the entire remnant of Israel and from all the people of Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

10 Then they entrusted it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the LORD's temple. These men paid the workers who repaired and restored the temple.

11 They also gave money to the carpenters and builders to purchase dressed stone, and timber for joists and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin.

12 The men did the work faithfully. Over them to direct them were Jahath and Obadiah, Levites descended from Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, descended from Kohath. The Levites- **all who were skilled in playing musical instruments-**

13a had charge of the laborers and supervised all the workers from job to job. NIV

It was the Levites skilled in playing musical instruments that had oversight of the rebuilding of the Temple during Josiah's revival! This is not coincidental. Worship leaders skilled in playing music are instrumental in building up the church! God expects excellence from us. He wants us to grow in the giftings that he has given us. If you play an instrument or sing, seek to be skilled at it so that you may lead others in worship.

Three major classes of instruments are listed by the 150th Psalm. These three are the basic classes of instruments mentioned in the entire Bible. They are string, wind, and percussion instruments. The modern orchestra is composed of four instrument families: woodwinds, percussion, strings, and brass. But since the brass and the woodwinds are all wind instruments, the three classes of instruments in the Bible are the same classes we use today.

We are going to examine each of these classes of instruments individually, because none are without signification.

I. Strings-

Harps-

1) Strong's definition- **Harp**

OT:3658- kinnowr (kin-nore'); from a unused root meaning to twang; a harp: -harp.

1 Sam 10:5-6

5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. KJV

1 Sam 16:23 KJV

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

1 Chron 25:1-3

1 David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service:

2 From the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asarelah. The sons of Asaph were under the supervision of Asaph, who prophesied under the king's supervision.

3 As for Jeduthun, from his sons: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six in all, under the supervision of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied, using the harp in thanking and praising the LORD. NIV

Ps 33:2-3

2 Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. NIV

Ps 49:4 “I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will disclose my dark saying on the harp.” NKJV

The music of the harp was used to reveal the meaning of the “dark saying” and make it easier to absorb and memorize.

Ps 71:22

I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. NIV

Ps 92:1-3

1 It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High,
2 to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,
3 to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp. NIV

Ps 98:5 “make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,” NIV

Isa 30:32

Every stroke the LORD lays on them with his punishing rod will be to the music of tambourines and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm. NIV

The above verses amply demonstrate the use of the harp in instruction (Ps. 49), worship, and warfare. It was the harp that calmed Saul, causing the evil spirit to depart, and inspired Elisha to prophecy. And as we read in Isaiah 30, the Lord fights our battles to the music of tambourines and harps.

*The New Testament equivalent to the Hebrew **kinnowr** is the Greek **kithar** and its verb form, **kitharizo**.*

Strong’s definition-

NT:2788 - kithara (kith-ar'-ah); of uncertain affinity; a lyre: KJV - harp. [kitharizo means to play the harp or lyre – 2789].

It is an eternal instrument:

Rev 5:8

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. KJV

Rev 14:1-3

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.
2 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:
3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. KJV

Rev 15:2-4

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God [*this is like the “musical instruments of God.”*].

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. KJV

Distinct harping is compared to distinct prophetic utterance:

1 Cor 14:6-7

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? KJV

***Kithar** is the word from which we get our English word guitar.*

2) Strong's definition- **Psaltery**

OT:5035 - nebel (neh'-bel); or nebel (nay'-bel); from **OT:5034**; a skin-bag for liquids (from collapsing when empty); hence, a vase (as similar in shape when full); also a lyre (as having a body of like form): KJV - bottle, pitcher, psaltery, vessel, viol.

OT:5034 - nabel (naw-bale'); a primitive root; to wilt; generally, to fall away, fail, faint; figuratively, to be foolish or (morally) wicked; causatively, to despise, disgrace: KJV - disgrace, dishonour, lightly esteem, fade (away, -ing), fall (down, -ling, off), do foolishly, come to nought, X surely, make vile, wither.

1 Chron 15:16

And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, **psalteries** and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy. KJV

Ps 144:9

I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a **psaltery** and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee. KJV

Isa 14:11

Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your **stringed instruments** [*KJV – viols*]; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you.' NKJV

This verse in Isaiah is in reference to Lucifer. We learn in this verse that he had stringed instruments.

Ezek 28:13 NKJV

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.

As we see in Ezekiel, he also has timbrels (percussion) and pipes (wind). He was made for music and as a worship leader in heaven, he was instrumental in making the covering habitation of praise in heaven for God. As we know, he lost his job because he desired to be the praised instead of finding his purpose in being the praiser. This is one of the reasons the praise and worship of God drives the enemy bonkers. It reminds him of all that is lost. Man now stands where he once walked "in the midst of the stones of fire."

The word used for harp gives reference to how it is played (twanged). The word used for psalter gives reference to how the instrument was shaped (like a skin bag or bottle). Unlike the simple harp, the psalter had a sound box or vessel to help resonate the sound.

3) Strong's definition- **ten string harp**

OT:6218 - `asowr (aw-sore'); or `asor (aw-sore'); from **OT:6235**; ten; by abbrev. ten strings, and so a decachord: KJV - (instrument of) ten (strings, -th).

OT:6235 - `eser (eh'ser); masculine of term `asarah (as-aw-raw'); from **OT:6237**; ten (as an accumulation to the extent of the digits): KJV - ten, [fif-, seven-] teen.

OT:6237 - `asar (aw-sar'); a primitive root (ident. with OT:6238); to accumulate; but used only as denominative from OT:6235; to tithe, i.e. to take or give a tenth: KJV - X surely, give (take) the tenth, (have, take) tithe (-ing, -s), X truly.

Ps 33:2 KJV

Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

While the other words for harp refer to how they are played or the shape they take, the 'asar has emphasis on the number of strings on the instrument. Whenever God makes mention of number, we should pay attention because He is not only telling us how many, but He is also giving us additional truth through symbolism. Numbers in Scripture have significance. The number ten is the number of law and order (ten comandments), trial and testing (Luke 19:13), and the tithe. As the tithe is representative of all of our sustenance, I see the ten string lyre as representative of all music.

Dissonance- a combination of notes conventionally considered to suggest unrelieved tension and to require resolution.

Consonance- a simultaneous combination of sounds conventionally regarded as pleasing and final in effect.

The melodic (one at a time) and harmonic (together) intervals possible on a ten string-
2nds (1-2) - 9 (dissonant)

3rds (1-3) -	8	(consonant)
4ths (1-4) -	7	(dissonant)
5ths (1-5) -	6	(consonant)
6ths (1-6) -	5	(consonant) ²
7ths (1-7) -	4	(dissonant)
Octave (1-8)-	3	(consonant)

Thus, we have 3 dissonants (complete discord) and 5 consonants (grace affects its final pleasantness on our dissonance).

Two	-	division
Three	-	Godhead, completeness
Four	-	the world, creation
Five	-	grace
Six	-	man
Seven	-	perfection
Eight	-	resurrection, new beginning

Thus, putting all this together, we have:

9 dissonant 2nds	-	We were/are completely divided from God.
8 consonant 3rds	-	With God, there is a new beginning.
7 dissonant 4ths	-	Perfection is coming to the world.
6 consonant 5ths	-	Man is in need of God's grace.
5 consonant 6ths	-	God offers His grace to man.
4 dissonant 7ths	-	The creation groans for perfection.
3 consonant Octaves-		The Godhead is bringing a new beginning [resurrection, new heaven and new earth].

In considering the harp, I wondered how it came to be invented. The Bible tells us who developed it.

Gen 4:19-21

19 Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah.

20 Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.

21 His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. NIV

Interestingly enough, it was one out of the line of Cain who was the father of harp and flute players. In its crudest form, a harp is a string held in tension by bent wood. I began to wonder which came first, the bow or the harp. Since we know that worship is warfare and we know that we can use instruments in worship, then these instruments must also be weapons. I can think of no better weapon to compare the harp to than the bow.

“The earliest delineations of the harp in Egypt point to its having had its origin in nothing more elaborate than the tense string of the warrior's or hunter's bow.”³

² to me, anyway. 1-6 (C-A) is akin to (A-C), which is a third. Only in the sixth, the A is an octave up from the third (A-C). It sounds more promising than in need of resolution.

Ps 21:7-13

- 7 For the king trusts in the LORD, And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.
- 8 Your hand will find all Your enemies; Your right hand will find those who hate You.
- 9 You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger; The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, And the fire shall devour them.
- 10 Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth, And their descendants from among the sons of men.
- 11 For they intended evil against You; They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.
- 12 Therefore You will make them turn their back; You will make ready Your arrows on Your **string**¹ toward their faces.
- 13 Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength! We will sing and **praise**² Your power. NKJV

Strong's definition-

OT:4340 **meythar**¹ (may-thar'); from OT:3498; a cord (of a tent) [compare OT:3499] or the string (of a bow): KJV - cord, string.

OT:2167 - **zamar**² (zaw-mar'); a primitive root [perhaps ident. with OT:2168 through the idea of striking with the fingers]; 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: KJV - give praise, sing forth praises, psalms.

Before we deal with the bow, I want to deal with the string. Psalm 21 is the only place I could find that specifically mentioned the string of God's bow. This word is used elsewhere only of the cords of a tent, specifically the Tabernacle of Moses plus these two other uses.

Jer 10:20-21

- 20 My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my **cords**¹ are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.
- 21 For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered. KJV

Isa 54:1-3

- 1 "Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD.
- 2 "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your **cords**¹, strengthen your stakes.
- 3 For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities. NIV

Where senseless shepherds cut the cords of the tabernacle, the song of the barren woman causes them to be lengthened. Praising God does build a habitation for His manifest presence (Ps. 22:3)!

³ "Harp", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Volume 11, p. 213, 1958

Zamar verses-

*The notching of the arrow on the bow is couple with the playing of music on a stringed instrument in Psalm 21. The Hebrew word is **zamar**. God wants us to praise Him on the strings.*

Ps 18:49

Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD; I will **sing praises**² to your name. NIV

This verse is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:9.

Rom 15:9

so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will **sing hymns**³ to your name." NIV

Strong's definition-

NT:5567 – **psallo**³ (psal'-lo); probably strengthened from psao (to rub or touch the surface; compare NT:5597); to twitch or twang, i.e. to play on a stringed instrument (celebrate the divine worship with music and accompanying odes): KJV - make melody, sing (psalms).

1 Cor 14:15

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will **sing**³ with the spirit, and I will **sing**³ with the understanding also. KJV

Once again, we have the playing of the strings coupled with prophetic utterance.

Eph 5:19-20 NIV

19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and **make music**³ in your heart to the Lord,
20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

James 5:13 NIV

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him **sing**³ songs of praise.

Ps 27:4-6

4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.
5 For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.
6 Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I **will sing and make music**² to the LORD. NIV

Ps 68:1-6

1 May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him.
2 As smoke is blown away by the wind, may you blow them away; as wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God.
3 But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.

4 Sing to God, **sing praise**² to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds-- his name is the LORD-- and rejoice before him.
5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.
6 God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

22 The Lord says, "I will bring them from Bashan; I will bring them from the depths of the sea,
23 that you may plunge your feet in the blood of your foes, while the tongues of your dogs have their share."

24 Your procession has come into view, O God, the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary.

25 In front are the singers, after them the musicians; with them are the maidens playing tambourines.

26 Praise God in the great congregation; praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel.

32 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth, **sing praise**² to the Lord, Selah

33 to him who rides the ancient skies above, who thunders with mighty voice. [*What causes thunder? Lightning. Lightning bolts are the arrows of God (Ps. 18:14).*]

34 Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the skies.

35 You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God! NIV

Ps 92:1-5

1 It is good to praise the LORD and **make music**² to your name, O Most High,

2 to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,

3 to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp.

4 For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands.

5 How great are your works, O LORD, how profound your thoughts! NIV

Ps 144:9-10 NIV

9 I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will **make music**² to you,

10 to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword.

Ps 149:3-9

3 Let them praise his name with dancing and **make music**² to him with tambourine and harp.

4 For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

5 Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.

6 May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands,

7 to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,

8 to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron,

9 to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD. NIV

Amen!