

God Is Calling for a New Sound of Worship

If we truly want the power of God's presence in our worship, we must break out of all religious ruts and be willing to sing a new song.

In the church's modern sophistication, we have processed something out of our worship that God wants to restore. It reminds me of the way we process bread. We take out all the good stuff, grind and bleach what's left, then replace some of the nutrients. The same thing has happened in the church.

The ex-worship leader of the universe, Satan, slipped into the church and said: "I'll take those raucous horns. They can't be holy. They're the traditional instruments of warfare. You don't need those disturbing your services.

"And I'll definitely take those noisy drums off your hands, and give me those cymbals—you don't need them.

"Oh, I've got to have the guitars—they sound so good, they've got to be sinful, right? Yeah, this is what I want you to sing. It sounds nice and religious and lethargic, uh, I mean worshipful. Now whatever you do, don't put any passion or emotion in your worship and praise music because you know those are bad."

A snore is heard in the background.

For centuries, God's people have been passing by the devil's bistros and bars that are just jamming with the most powerful sounds imaginable, and though we are attracted to the music, we resist it because we've been taught that it's the devil's music. Satan understands the power of music, but the church has been so ignorant through the centuries that it has freely given away what God intended to be its exclusive domain. God

is saying to us, "Get with it!" He wants us to worship Him like David did 5,000 years ago.

David was ahead of his time. He delved so deeply into the depths of worship that he crossed the barrier of time into new covenant intimacy with God—intimacy that transcended the law! We need today what David had back then, but our problem is that we are afraid of new things.

We like the old, even if God isn't speaking that language anymore. When someone dares to introduce something fresh that the Holy Spirit is doing, strong opposition will present itself—especially from those who experienced a previous move of the Holy Spirit.

David introduced something that was born of the Spirit and moved simultaneously with another wineskin. The incredible expansion of David's kingdom can be attributed to nothing but his commitment to praise and worship. David was a "praise animal." He knew how to do it right.

Jesus, the prophetic "son of David," was the same way. He was a worshiper; He understood the power and importance of praise to His Father. That's why He told the Samaritan woman at the well: "The Father is not looking for apostles. He is not looking for prophets and evangelists either. God is a spirit, and He is looking for real worshipers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth" (see John 4:23).

If the church today will grab hold of this truth, we too will see God's kingdom expand phenomenally. Something mighty is taking place in the earth today, and praise and worship are at the center of it. I can stand in our worship facility in Pittsburgh and join in praise and worship with other believers around the world and affect nations! The shock wave of our praise is unaffected by distance, different time zones, or different languages, cultures and political systems. Praise is a spiritual force to be reckoned with, and the church is just

now catching on to this truth.

A House of Worship

The central focal point in Old Testament worship was the ark of the covenant, on which the cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat. It was universally considered to be the most significant piece of furniture in the tabernacle.

David organized the Levites to minister regularly before the ark of the covenant according to each day's requirements, but there was something odd about the whole arrangement. It was radically different from the worship offered at the tabernacle of Moses.

In David's day, the ark of the covenant rested in the place David had prepared for it, on the little hill formerly called Mount Zion, now called "the city of David." The holy ark was simply covered with a tent—it was not blocked out or concealed from view. The tent was only extensive enough to protect the ark from natural elements such as rain, heavy dew and the sun's rays. The tabernacle of Moses had three layers of shielding separating the shekinah presence of God from the common people.

When the ark of the covenant was in Moses' tabernacle, it was completely concealed in the holy of holies. Only one person was permitted to enter that room once a year. David's tabernacle also had an area called the holy of holies, and in every other respect, besides the mostly open tent design, David followed the patterns established in the tabernacle of Moses (see 1 Chr. 16:39-40)—with one incredible difference.

David was not a priest in the line of Aaron, nor was he a Levite. Yet 2 Samuel 7:18 says he sat in the presence of God in front of the ark in the holy of holies. Keep in mind that under the law, only the high priest was allowed to enter the most holy place with the ark of the covenant to offer sacrifices once a year. What we see here is that David

represents a greater priesthood, a type of shadow of the coming Messiah, which is confirmed in Hebrews:

“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood.

“And is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7:12-16, NKJV).

David was unknowingly demonstrating that a greater priesthood was coming, a priesthood rooted in relationship, not mere ritual or ancestral lineage. We have become a kingdom of priests and kings in Christ before God.

David was a type of shadow for the better priesthood to come. God was building a house—the house of David—whose Seed, Jesus Christ, would tear down the dividing walls so every man and woman could sit and gaze at the beauty of the Lord’s presence.

Something happens when you behold God’s shekinah glory and the beauty of His presence. You discover what the writer of Psalm 73 learned, “When I thought how to understand [why the wicked prosper], it was too painful for me—until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end” (Ps. 73:16-17, emphasis added). When we go into the tabernacle with shouts of joy as a sacrifice, we are able to get God’s perspective on things.

David fostered an intimate, loving, confident relationship with the living God—a relationship never seen in the earth up to that point in human history. Some leaders were allowed to commune with God, but never on such an intimate and loving level. David’s precedent-setting relationship with God would be unequalled until the arrival of Jesus Christ. The power of

his praise and worship is still being restored to the church today!

A New Song

Although our Savior is the same yesterday, today and forever, our understanding of God and the worship we offer to Him is changing. Though it won't be perfected in our time, we are sure to express worship with greater depth and maturity the more we walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

David's tabernacle ushered in a new sound, a new sacrifice and a new song. These things are like the precious treasures Jesus described to the disciples in the Gospel of Matthew after sharing several parables on the kingdom of heaven: "Then He said to them, 'Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old'" (Matt. 13:52).

We combine old things with new things because people are uncomfortable with new things. Most of us don't embrace change; we usually sit in disapproving shock.

Martin Luther faced the same obstacles in his day. When this great church leader was looking for a way to capture the mind of his generation, after much prayer he was led to "borrow" a popular bar song of the day and fit it with a new set of lyrics based on some powerful biblical truths. Today we recognize this classic hymn as "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"!

Luther piggybacked substantive, theologically sound words with the popular melodies of a Top 40 beer-guzzling song—and it worked. Luther was able to grab the hearts and minds of his generation with a revolutionary product of the age. The same thing happened in the ministry of the Wesley brothers during the Great Awakening when many popular hymns were created by using melodies common in pubs and taverns across England and the United States.

In our day, stuffy church folks from coast to coast often criticize modern musical styles, such as rap, hip-hop and alternative music. They think the church will be just fine singing the sacred classics, such as “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”

Rap and hip-hop aren’t my thing either, but it is the music of this generation. If it was possible for a new sound to emerge in God’s kingdom in David’s day, in the days of Martin Luther and in the Wesleys’ day, isn’t it possible for God to do something new now?

First Chronicles says something unusual about the content, scale and format of worship in David’s day. “So when David was gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priest and the Levites. Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and above; and the number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand. Of thousand praised the Lord with musical instruments, ‘which I made,’ said David, ‘for giving praise’” (1 Chr. 23: 1-5).

The Hebrew word translated as “made” in this passage first appears in Genesis 1:7, which says, “Thus God made [asah] the firmament” (Gen. 1:7). This word is often translated, “to create, to make, to fashion.” Why am I making such a big deal over such a little word?

David personally made or crafted instruments for this temple band. Ask yourself how often you’ve heard of people creating new musical instruments; quite a few have appeared in the last few decades, and most of them were linked to modern technologies.

God gave David new music that couldn’t be produced with existing musical instruments and methods. The only solution for this psalmist was to create new instruments and methods to match the new music in his soul!

King David began to hear new sounds during his time of praise

and worship before the ark of the covenant. This consummate worshiper also wrote, prophesied and preached to the congregation of the Lord out of the psalmic mode. This man of the future was hearing and seeing things in the heavenlies while living in an earthly dimension.

He must have asked himself, "How do I reproduce the sound that I heard in the heavens?" When he had the answer, He told his sons: "I want you to build this temple exactly according to the pattern God put in my mind. But the sound I heard can't be produced the old way, and the old instruments can't carry this thing by themselves.

God gave me some ideas, and I just made up some new instruments myself! Give these instruments I made to your holy jazz band and turn them loose to do something completely different."

God birthed a new sound and a new song in David in the years before Solomon built the temple. David entered the glory of God and emerged with something that you and I still need to receive and manifest in our day!

Religious people need to understand that when God said in Isaiah 43:19, "'Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?'" He wasn't talking about a one-time event. He was describing His eternal mode of continually doing new things in the earth for His own glory.

All the new stuff doesn't go to the world first. It goes to God's people first, but too often we reject it because it is different. Yet God wants to get His "new thing" to the earth so badly, He will use whatever channel is open to Him.

My Bible says, "Every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

We need to pray that God will show us how to recover that

which has been distorted by the devil—and that He will show us how to advance about nine steps ahead of the disorder so we can “pied piper” a brand-new sound to lead a brand-new generation to the Savior!

David awakened his world with such a phenomenal depth and scope of praise and worship that it literally, physically extended the borders of the kingdom of God! If we focus on the Lord and the things He has given us, and if we begin to offer Him the fruit of our lips, notice what happens:

1. God releases forgiveness, healing and love (see Hosea 14:4).
2. God establishes us and causes us to become fruitful (see Hosea 14:5).
3. God sends out His shoots, and people are drawn to Christ (see Hosea 14:6-7).

People are hungry for God, and God is waiting for us to begin singing a new song tailor-made for our generation. Even as we beg for more intimacy with Him, His Spirit is pleading with us: “Try something new. Try singing a new song that I will use to draw the nations.”

We need to humble ourselves before His tabernacle, a tabernacle not made with hands, and pray together in unity: “Lord, make us living instruments of worship and praise, created to sing new songs and creative, ever-changing melodies at Your slightest cue, and to sing majestic hymns to Your glory with awesome, unique sounds emanating from redeemed vessels of praise!”

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