



## Worship and Music

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Worship, music and counterfeits. A definition of terms may prove useful to assure that all readers understand these words in the same way.

For purposes of this article, music is a gift of God. It is a wonderful gift, because He has given us a part of Himself. Everybody knows that God is love. And God gives us that love. What about music? In Exodus 15:2 and Isaiah 12:2 it says, "The Lord is my strength and song." God Himself is my song, and He gives me music.

Everybody has their own ideas concerning worship, but a definition can be helpful. R. C. Leonard provides one: "Worship is the central focus of a vital Christian faith, and the most distinctive activity of the church of Jesus Christ. The biblical words translated 'worship' (Hebrew *shachah*, Greek *proskuneo*) mean, literally, to bow down or bend the knee. Such was the ancient gesture of honor to a sovereign and superior authority. To worship is to offer the oath of covenant loyalty to the Great King, and to affirm our faithfulness as His servants. For this reason, the worship of God, through Jesus Christ, lies at the heart of all Christian expression." R. C. Leonard, *Worship in the Church*, January 1997, <http://members.aol.com./laudemont/witec.hum>. (April 15, 2001).

Now, consider counterfeits. One popular definition is that a counterfeit is a cheap imitation of the real thing. It is cheap, and it is an imitation. Whenever there is something important that comes from God, Satan has to counterfeit it. So if you notice a counterfeit, it is a good idea to look at the real thing, because it must be very important for Satan to bother counterfeiting it. Do counterfeits look nice? Do they sound nice? Certainly! They are glittery and beautiful and meant to attract. Counterfeits are not good things to have, because they are not worth much and can even be dangerous. You do not want to be found using counterfeit money, do you?

### True Worship

All through history, worship has been conducted in different ways, true worship and counterfeit, pagan worship. Even true worship has varied at different times and in different cultural settings. This article does not have time or space to examine historical worships. Presently, we are concerned with worship in the last days, in our own time. God gives us information concerning the worship He requires in the final days. We find it in Revelation 14, in the Three Angels' Messages. In fact, that is one of the basic things they are all about. God does not leave any significant chance of our misunderstanding what He wants.

Look at the Three Angels' Messages in Revelation 14:6–12, and read them through. In the first message, verse 7, the angel says, "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." There is that word—worship. We are commanded to worship, and who is to be the object of our worship? The Creator God. That is very plain. We are commanded to worship the One and only true God, the One

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Who, down through history, has repeated His covenant with us to be our God and to claim us as His people. This is the first big message for us.

The second and third messages tell us that there is someone we are commanded not to worship—the beast. The scope of this article does not include identifying the beast, but the angels' messages tell us the consequences of worshipping the beast—nothing but bad things, horrifying things. The end of that message gives the identifying marks of those who worship the true God—they keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.

It is reasonable to say that all of these identifying marks and commands lead to the conclusion that the worship of God is the true worship and the *only* true worship. Also, the worship of the beast is the false, or counterfeit, worship. Everything that goes with the worship of the beast is false or counterfeit worship. Some of the things this involves include the false sabbath and the false music. Although many other things could be included, the emphasis of this article is music, true God-based music and false, counterfeit music.

### Where Does Music Come In?

Some may ask, Can you prove that music is a part of worship? There have been many people, throughout history, who have said that instrumental music should not be used. John Calvin, for example, claimed that the instrumental music used in the Old Testament times was meant for people who were tender and like children. "But in New Testament times Christ has come and the church has reached full age, it would only bury the light of the gospel should we introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation." John L. Girardeau, *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*, New Covenant Publication Society, Havertown, PA., 1983, 63, 64.

What about music in worship in the last days, in the setting of the Three Angels' Messages? Consider the following statements:

"As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer." *Education*, 168. Many other quotations could be cited which include instrumental music.

"Singing is just as much the worship of God in a religious meeting as speaking. . . ." *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 333.

According to Mrs. White, music in worship includes speaking, prayer, and singing. Each of these aspects of music may be true worship or counterfeit worship. So music is an important part of worship, making it an important part of the Third Angel's Message and what God wants from us in these last days. It does matter what our music is like. It shows our allegiance to God and our acceptance of His covenant, or it shows our allegiance to the beast. God does not accept any counterfeit in His worship.

### The Roles of Music in Worship

Let us examine exactly what music accomplishes in the worship service. Actually it plays many roles:

1. Music sets the mood. The thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the people are controlled by the music. Alertness or sleepiness may be caused by the music. Music creates a proper frame of mind for the rest of the service. If a minister wants to introduce strange ideas of theology, he can use what we call celebration music to put the people into a hypnotic state, and they accept and retain in their minds whatever he wishes—without even knowing it is happening.
2. Music creates unity and harmony. People feel and think together because of the music. It is a kind of group entrainment. (That word is not entertainment.) What is entrainment? Scientists have discovered

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that when two rhythms are placed adjacent to each other they lock into each other and become the same rhythm. They first discovered this with pendulum clocks—back in the 1600s. If the clocks were close together, the pendulums would start swinging the same. Since then we have learned that we can control all kinds of body rhythms with music. Just play the music with the speed or vibration you want, and you can slow down or accelerate the heart rate, or any of the other rhythms in the body, including brain waves.

If you play fast, jazzy rhythms at the beginning of church, your whole body gears up to the same thing. Scientists have found ways to eject rhythms of whatever tempo they want, add certain tones into musical recordings, and nobody knows they are there, but their brains accept them and respond accordingly, maybe even slowing them down enough to become like zombies. One danger of this is that Satan can use his counterfeit in accompaniment tapes that vocalists buy, and nobody ever knows the difference. Recent research shows that group entrainment may take place. One study showed that, in a university class, the brain waves of the students entrained with those of the professor. This has serious implications for those who are using NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) to control others. "While preaching, praying, or conversing, some professed Adventists who had rejected present truth used mesmerism to gain adherents, and the people would rejoice in this influence, for they thought it was the Holy Ghost." *Early Writings*, 44. Now the scientists are showing us it can really happen. Do not think it is foolish imagination. Satan is using his false, counterfeit worship and the music in it to control people's minds. This fact makes it extremely important that we do not use Satan's music in worship, and certainly not anywhere else either.

3. Music creates a kind of people. You are what you eat; you are what you see; you are what you hear. You are the kind of music to which you listen.

4. Music invokes the Holy Spirit and invites the presence of angels. "When the singing is such that angels can unite with the singers, an impression is made on minds that singing from unsanctified lips cannot make. . . . The songs in which every word is uttered clearly, in a musical tone, are the songs that they [angels] join us in singing. They take up the refrain that is sung from the heart with the spirit and the understanding." *Evangelism*, 509, 510.

5. Most important of all, music is an act of worship. This places it as a significant part of true worship, which then makes it an important part of the Three Angels' Messages.

### **Praise Ye the Lord**

What difference does it make what music we have in our worship services? If music is basically entertainment, why do we have music in worship at all? Many people have said that music is just a matter of preference. In other words, just choose what you like. The problem is there is a big difference. And it all goes back to God's music for God's worship and Satan's music (counterfeit) for Satan's worship.

A search of the Bible will reveal not only what God wants us to sing about but also how He wants us to sing. If music is an important part of the worship of God, He must have given us some instruction about it.

The thing mentioned more often than anything else is praise. "Praise ye the Lord. . . . Let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp." Psalm 149:1, 3. "Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." Psalm 147:1.

## **Offer Thanksgiving for His Goodness**

The thing mentioned most frequently after praise is thanksgiving. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High." Psalm 92:1. Does God get tired of hearing us thank Him? No, He does not.

We should use joyful songs. "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of His name: make His praise glorious." Psalm 66:1, 2. "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy." Psalm 67:4.

## **What Should Our Music Include?**

Majesty—"They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord. . . ." Isaiah 24:14.

God's Righteousness—"They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness, and shall sing of Thy righteousness." Psalm 145:7.

God's Power—"Be Thou exalted, Lord, in Thine own strength: so will we sing and praise Thy power." Psalm 21:13.

God's Mercy and Judgment—"I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing." Psalm 101:1.

To God's Name—"So will I sing praise unto Thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows." Psalm 61:8.

Other verses give us the following: To the glory of God, God's goodness, Ways of the Lord, Science of Salvation, Psalms, Holy songs, Words of the Law, Prophecy, Songs of Triumph and Victory, Faith and Holy Cheer, Hope and Trust. And the final song for the future: the Song of Deliverance.

## **Music of the Word**

It seems that God has given us plenty to sing about without resorting to the devil's counterfeit songs about our own selves and our own feelings. It would be a good idea if we would try to practice now for the music of heaven.

I have a dream that some might like to share with me. Imagine a few Seventh-day Adventist churches here and there who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus and are doing all they can to avoid the devil's counterfeit music, becoming serious about their music being God's music. Even a church or two could start it. What if these churches started making the music of their church Seventh-day Adventist music? How, you ask, could you do that? Well, there is the previous list that God gave us. With that, suppose we sing songs about the Three Angels' Messages, about Christ's Second Coming, about the Sabbath, about the state of the dead, about the sanctuary, about the Spirit of Prophecy—the pillars of our faith. That is just a start. There are plenty of songs in our hymnal that we already know and more good songs that we could learn. For example, do you know the song about the judgment, "Christ the Lord, All Power Possessing," found on page 415 in the new hymnal? The first verse is about Christ ascending to heaven; the second verse pictures the judgment; the third verse is about Christ coming back. The tune is an exciting, vigorous tune, and the song is well worth some effort to learn. After searching out all of the wonderful songs that truly tell of our own Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, we need to think about the words as we sing them and breathe new life into them. Our whole church will become invigorated!

### **Words with Meaning**

Where Mrs. White wrote that song is an act of worship and song is prayer, she continues as follows: "If the child is taught to realize this, he will think more of the meaning of the words he sings and will be more susceptible to their power." *Education*, 168. The older ones among us are not too old to learn the same lesson.

Are you and your church singing God's music in your worship services, or is the devil's counterfeit music sneaking in among you? Is your music preparing you for heaven?