

an  
introduction  
to

# worship

in song



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## Chapter One

# WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The word ‘worship’ creates various pictures in different peoples’ minds. To some it means a church service with much ceremony and tradition. To others it means the opposite - a special kind of singing in a spontaneous style of meeting. To yet others it may mean deep contemplative prayer or praise.

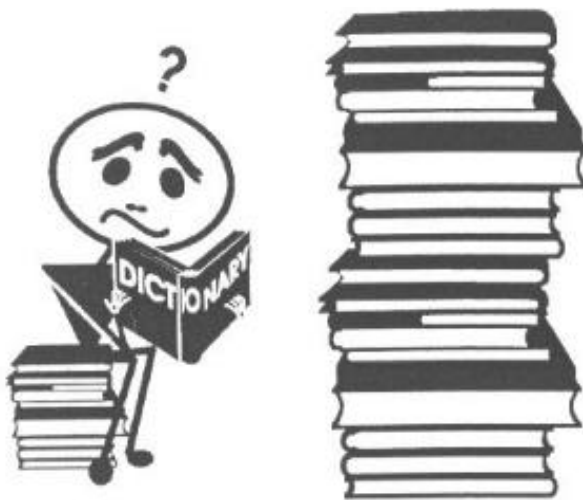
### **So what is worship?**

Let us first consider two of the words in the original Greek,<sup>1</sup> as well as the English root.

- The Greek word ‘proskuneo’ means: ‘to revere, to adore, to make obeisance, to pay homage, to kiss’. This is the most used word for ‘worship’ in the New Testament.
- Another Greek word is ‘latreuo’, that is sometimes translated ‘to worship’, and also means ‘to serve, to pay homage’.

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<sup>1</sup> The language in which the New Testament was written.



- The English word ‘worship’ has its roots in the word ‘worth’ or ‘worth-ship’, and meant acknowledging the true worth of someone. It also currently means ‘to hold in extreme love and reverence.’

In essence, ‘worship’ is love and relationship being fully expressed in service, praise or adoration. Worship is really a state of heart..

## **WORSHIP INVOLVES AN ALTAR**

The desire to worship is in all men and women. We were created this way. Paul found this especially true when he came to Athens and found a great number of idols throughout the city. Every known god was represented, and there was even an altar to ‘the unknown god’. Look at the many religions around the world now, and see how that, even in modern times, new ones are forming every year. But man’s desire for fulfilling worship can only be satisfied when it is an expression of relationship in God.

God the Father is looking for ‘true worshippers’. (John 4:23).

In the Old Testament, beginning with Cain and Abel, if any man wanted to worship God he built an altar and offered an animal upon it.

Noah, on coming out of the ark, after the flood, built an altar and sacrificed clean animals upon it, and God smelt the smoke as a 'sweet savour'.



The first thing Abraham did on arriving in the land of promise was to build an altar, and all through his life he continued to do the same. His son, Isaac, seemed to do little else other than dig wells and build altars.

In the wilderness Moses built the tabernacle containing, among other things, two altars - one of brass for burning animals, and one of gold for burning incense. From then on, Israel had to offer sacrifices morning and night, every day, continually. They had many other offerings as well, that individual Israelites would bring; for no one could appear before God empty-handed - they all were required to bring an offering of some kind when they came to the tabernacle. The burning of incense was also an offering of worship and prayer, and even their sin offerings and trespass offerings were counted as worship. (Heb 10:2)

# THE GREATEST OFFERING

But all of these offerings were simply pointing to the greatest offering in heaven and earth - the offering of Jesus as **the ‘Lamb of God’**. He was the fulfillment of every sacrifice offered in the preceding four thousand years. Not only the sacrifices for sin and atonement, but much more; the sacrifices of worship. The attitude in which Jesus went to the cross was one of total love and submission to the Father, and His sacrifice was primarily an act of worship. (John 14:31, 15:10). In fact, it is the greatest demonstration of worship in all time and eternity. Jesus was indeed a **‘true worshipper’**.

The twenty-second Psalm is a vivid prophetic picture of Jesus on the cross. We gain an insight into Jesus’ thoughts and feelings as He hung there saying in His heart *“You are holy Who inhabit the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You and you delivered them”*. (Psalm 22:3,4). This Psalm goes on to describe in graphic detail the scene before Jesus as the crowds mock and despise Him and as Satan rejoices over Him. Yet Jesus inwardly asserts with full assurance, *“I will declare Your Name unto My brethren and in the midst of the Church will I sing praise to You,”* (verse 22) and *“My praise of You shall be in the great congregation.”* (Verse 25). Other prophetic Psalms quote Jesus as saying, *“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body you have prepared Me,”* (Heb 10:5) and, *“I will praise the name of My God with a song. This will please You more than an ox which has hooves and horns.”* (Psalm 69:30-31).

It is remarkable how that this offering of Jesus on the cross was prefigured so dramatically in the life of Abraham and Isaac two thousand years earlier. (Gen 22). Abraham was well over a hundred years old when God tested him by saying, *“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will show you.”* (Gen 22:2). So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, split the wood for the burnt offering, and, with two of his young men and Isaac his son, he set off. On the third day Abraham saw the place in the distance and said to the two servants *“Stay here with the donkey; the lad (Isaac) and I will go yonder and **worship** and we will return.”* (Gen 22:5).

Here God was painting a symbolic picture, and we will note several important points:

- Isaac was an only begotten son who was born under miracle circumstances. In this he was like Jesus, the only begotten Son of God who was born into the world by a miracle, to a virgin.
- The journey took three days, and Abraham expected both he and Isaac to return, even though he was going to offer Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. This was because Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac to life again from the ashes of the altar. (Heb 11:19). Jesus, likewise, would be raised after three days.
- Isaac was totally willing and submissive to his father and he was prepared to be the ‘lamb’ that God would provide. In this he was also a picture of Jesus.

Abraham regarded his offering of Isaac as an exercise in worship - a commission that would cost him the greatest price he could ever pay, the life of his only son. In this Abraham was a ‘true worshipper’, and when Isaac allowed himself to be placed upon the altar he also became a ‘true worshipper’.

The same is true for us. Our worship, in any mode of expression, will involve an altar, and a price which we willingly pay. Ultimately, that price will be our whole life. For example, on many occasions a song of worship can only be sung at great cost to ourselves as we step out in faith against the various pressures that may tend to hold us back.

## **TRUE WORSHIPPERS**

The heavenly Father wants us to be ‘true worshippers’, ones who will worship ‘in spirit and in truth’. Jesus said this to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. (John 4:22-24). What does it mean?

The woman had wanted to know whether Jerusalem or Samaria was the right place to worship. Considering the history of the Samaritans this would seem a ridiculous question. The Samaritans were not even true

descendants of Abraham, and their temple, which had been destroyed 160 years earlier, was built at the command of the king of Persia, by a rebellious Jew. This was not God's temple! Surely it should be obvious that the temple at Jerusalem, on the same mountain where Isaac had been offered, the temple made after the heavenly pattern, the temple among God's chosen people, was the only place to worship? But no! Jesus pointed to an infinitely higher mode of worship that is neither in Jerusalem nor in Samaria. Why?

'True worship' is not one particular mode of expression or another, whether psalms, hymns, liturgies, choruses, spontaneous singing, or any other form of expression. Neither does worship depend at all upon a place, a building, or the 'consecrated ground' of a stone church or temple.

So Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "*the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the father in spirit and in truth.*" (John 4:23).

## **'In spirit'**

To understand the phrase 'in spirit' we must first realise that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not just made of the substance called 'spirit'. We must realise that They live together in a special spiritual relationship. When Jesus said "*God is Spirit*" (John 4:24), He was referring to this relationship within the Godhead.

Such a relationship can be described as 'first love', and can only be found in the eternal family of God. As His sons, this is the relationship in which we are called to participate.

In this context, then, 'in spirit' does not mean being in some kind of trance or spiritual transport. It means that, by faith, we have<sup>3</sup> touched true identity and relationship in God, and from there we express our love and adoration for God. We speak and sing of His 'worth-ship', and of the reverence in which we hold Him.

But giving voice to this first-love relationship requires the combined activity of the Holy Spirit and our spirit, soul and body. Each of us is a threefold 'tabernacle in which worship is offered through service, life, song, praise, giving, and much more. God does not worship through us as a 'channel', as if we had no part to play except to yield. No! Rather, we

are the ones who do the worshipping, and it is the Holy Spirit Who enables us. It is the same principle that is demonstrated in speaking in tongues, where, I speak ‘as the Holy Spirit gives the utterance’ or the words to speak (Acts 2:4, 1Cor 14:14).

When we gather as the Body of Christ, this principle continues to function on a corporate level. Together we are the temple of God as we live in true, first-love relationship. That means we are ‘in spirit’. The Holy Spirit leads us and enables us in our worship together. Paul says it this way, “*we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit of God*” (Phil 3:3). Yet in another place he says, “*I serve God with my spirit*” (Rom 1:9) (literally translated would read, “*I worship with my spirit*”), and in another verse, “*We also serve in newness of (our) spirit*” (Rom 7:6)

## **‘In truth’**

To be ‘in truth’ is to be really involved with the truth of God’s purpose, not just a form we have made up. A ‘true worshipper’ cannot stand apart from what God is doing. We must understand God’s ultimate purpose, and be committed to it.

To be ‘true worshippers’ it is essential for us to be:

- living in truth, not living a lie;
- committed to God’s plan for His Church;
- being changed more and more by the word of God; and
- worshipping in reality, not just in a form or from habit.

By this definition, Abraham was a ‘true worshipper’ for he lived in relationship with God and was committed to what God required. When called upon to offer Isaac as a sacrifice he did not hesitate. Let us now look at the various ways in which worship can be expressed.

## **Serving can be worship**

Paul beseeches us to present our “*bodies a living sacrifice ... which is your spiritual worship*”. (Rom 12:1 - RSV). Another translation says it is our “*deliberate act of worship*”. Every act we perform involves our bodies. So then, any service we give to God is worship if it is done on a

‘spirit and truth’ basis. Attending a working bee or helping the needy can be worship, just as bringing an offering of money.

We have seen that the cross of Christ was an act of worship on His part. When the ‘cross’ is active in our lives we are also involved in worship. The ‘cross’ means the laying down of our rights; this is worship. It may mean ‘denying ourselves’ in some particular way; this is the ‘cross’ and therefore it is worship. It may mean the dedicating of our lives to some sacrificial form of serving. When this is truly the ‘cross’ at work then it is also worship.

At his trial before Felix the Governor, Paul said his whole life as a Christian was ‘worship’, and that was why he was being persecuted. (Acts 24:14).

## **Many kinds of expression can be worship**

Dancing, jumping for joy, shouting, bowing, prostrating, kneeling, are all biblical modes of praising God. They are all activities we become involved in by deliberate choice. We must hasten to add that while all worship has its appropriate expression, not all activity is necessarily worship. Activity can very quickly become habit if we are not constantly living in ‘first love’.

## **Music and song can be worship**

If worship is in our hearts towards God, then one of the most suitable ways of worshipping is in song. Song and music go ‘beyond words’ and express the **heart** of things.

In the world there are many different cultures, and in any group of people there are many different natures and personalities. Each of us has a unique way of expressing himself, and music and song provide a wonderful means of uniting all of these differences, enabling all of us to share in each other’s expression of worship. Music provides infinite variety yet it demands total unity, and because of this it is completely appropriate to the worship of the Body of Christ.

This brings us to the **main** topic of this booklet - **Worship in Song**.



## Chapter Two

# GETTING INVOLVED

There are various types of singing in which we can participate - choruses, hymns, spontaneous singing etc. Even though we love God, it can sometimes be hard to get started in worship, especially in the 'new song'.<sup>2</sup> But all it really takes, is the decision to do so.

Let us examine the first recorded song of scripture where over three million people joined in the world's largest choir. (Ex 15).

Israel had been in slavery to the Egyptians for nearly 400 years when Moses was sent to be their deliverer. After the ten plagues, which culminated in the first Passover feast, Israel was set free. They marched with their families and cattle towards the Red Sea and camped by its shores. But Pharaoh changed his mind and wanted to recapture them. But God surrounded Israel in the cloud of His presence, then He miraculously opened the Red Sea for them to cross. When Pharaoh and his chariots

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<sup>2</sup> Sometimes known as 'singing in the Spirit'

tried to follow them, God closed the sea again and swallowed the Egyptians up in it. The king and his army perished. What a mighty victory! Israel's joy was boundless as Moses led them in an inspired new song of worship to God; and the women followed on in a dance with timbrels and responsive singing: "*I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider He has thrown into the sea.*" (Ex 15:1). What an event to record as the first song in the Bible!

But how is this relevant to us in modern times?

The liberation of Israel from Egypt has an application in the life of every true Christian. Firstly, we are saved from sin by the blood of our 'Passover Lamb', Jesus. Secondly, we are baptised in water, and third, we are baptised in the Holy Spirit. Thus we are freed from our old life with its sin and slavery. Like the Egyptian army, the past is buried and we now live in the power and life of the Holy Spirit.

While this threefold beginning to our new life provides the basis for our worship to God, the responsibility to worship is ours. Note carefully the first words of this song of scripture: '*... I will sing ...*'



We may have expected these vital first words to be something about 'God'. Maybe 'God is great', 'God is worthy' or words to that effect. But no, they are '**I will**'. Why?

The reason is that worship involves a **decision** that each one of us must make. It is an act of **will**. God does not force worship from us, for then it would cease to be worship. It would be just a programmed response, like a tape recorder or a robot. No! We have been made free by

the cross of Christ, and now we use this freedom by submitting in love to Him Who has set us free. This is the context for worship.

Contrast this with Lucifer who, at his fall, said, *“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”* (Isaiah 14:13,14).

God’s response to him was, *“You shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit.”* (Isaiah 14:15)

We use the same two words as Lucifer did, **‘I will’**, yet the direction of our words is completely opposite. Lucifer aimed his worship towards himself. He was the ultimate in self-centred arrogance and pride. He even tried to tempt Jesus to worship him. (Luke 4:7). We, by contrast, direct our worship towards Him Who has set us free from Satan’s power, and from the bondage of self-centredness. But we are now called to overcome and to sit in the place that Satan wanted to usurp. We sit with Christ in His throne. (Eph 2:6).

## **My decision**

The decision to worship is now the normal response of this new, liberated person. When we come to church we must put this into operation. This means making a decision to participate. It means faith and obedience. To say ‘I’ll wait until I get inspired’ is not sufficient. The truth is that if we only worship when we get inspired, those times will get further and further apart. No, we must be free to worship, whatever our emotional climate may happen to be, because worship is based in our ongoing **relationship** with God, not in our changing emotions and feelings. Many are the times when we will have to decide, against our current feelings, to give God an offering of praise.

For young people it may mean paying attention to the meeting, and resisting all temptation to ‘fellowship’ with our friends in conversation or fun. It means giving God the honour of our full attention. For older folk it may entail laying aside thoughts of business or family matters.

In any gathering of people, there is always a huge temptation for some to sit inactive as spectators. Maybe they are shy or embarrassed.

Maybe they are tired or worried. They may be depressed, and some may even be rebellious. But very few of these reasons are really ever valid. Try to picture the enormous pressures Jesus had to overcome in the Garden of Gethsemane as he faced the awful prospect of the cross. I'm so glad He did not allow tiredness, worry or any negative emotion to hinder Him in His painful purpose.

## **Self-consciousness**

Worship in song is not usually painful, as Calvary was for Jesus. Nevertheless, there is often great resistance in and around us which we must decide to overcome. A common pressure is self-consciousness. Sometimes we may be wondering what others are thinking of us when we whole-heartedly join in the worship. Let's not forget that the others are just as worried about what we may be thinking of **them!** Whatever the pressure, we must make a decision of faith and commitment in order to overcome.

There is an old saying, 'you can be part of the problem, or part of the answer.' A person who does not participate when the congregation is worshipping creates a pressure on those around them who do want to join in. He makes them feel self conscious. On the other hand, when someone is enthusiastically involved in worship, they make it easy for so many others to join in.

**Individually** we make the decision to worship in song **together**.



## Chapter Three

# THE NEW SONG

*“He has put a **new song** in my mouth, even praise to our God. Many shall see it, and fear, and trust the Lord”. (Psalm 40:3).*

*“O Sing to the Lord a **new song**.” (Psalm 96:1; 98:1; 149:1)*

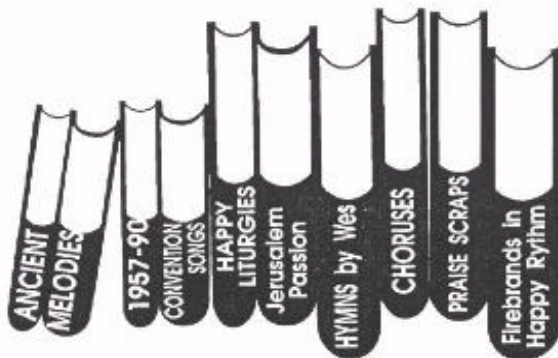
*“I will sing a new song to You, O God; on a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises to You.” (Psalm 144:9)*

The Church is full of songs, ancient and modern. Books are being published every day full of new material for soloists, groups and congregations. All of these can be a wonderful part of corporate worship. But what is a ‘new song’ in the context of the verses above?

A ‘**new song**’ is a song inspired at a particular moment, and for that particular occasion in our experience. These new songs may take the form of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs that come into existence as God inspires them. The Bible abounds in examples of such ‘new songs’. Here are a few:

**Moses** - We have already discussed the first recorded song of scripture which Moses and all Israel sang at the Red Sea. This was an

inspired celebration of an enormous victory, and it also became a song of accurate prophecy. It had obviously never been sung before, and it happened spontaneously at the moment of singing. What a musical miracle! A powerful song, full of revelation, which rang terror in the hearts of the inhabitants of Canaan.



**Deborah and Barak** - Deborah and Barak had a similar experience when they defeated Sisera in battle. (Judges 5:1) Deborah was a prophetess and Barak the leader of Israel's army, and when the battle was won, they together sang an inspired duet - a brand new song that is now recorded in Scripture for our benefit.

**Saul** - Saul prophesied in song among the prophets after Samuel had anointed him future king of Israel. (1 Sam 10:5, 10-11). Because this song was prophecy it was, by its very nature, a 'new song'.

**The maidens** - When David returned from one of his victories while Saul was still king, all the young women met him with a 'new song' of joy celebrating his triumphs. This song struck such terror in the heart of the rejected King Saul, that the next time David played before him on the harp he tried to kill David with his spear. (1 Sam 18:6-11).

**Twenty-four elders** - The twenty four elders of revelation 4 & 5 sing 'a new song' before the opening of the seals. We shall further discuss this aspect later in the study.

In this generation, as the Church moves towards perfection, her worship in the 'new song' will also be perfected. If 1500 years before Christ, worshippers could sing a 'new song' under the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit, how much more shall worshippers in the Church operate in the ‘new song’. After all, the Church began with the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit Who has come to bring us to full maturity in all things.

A ‘new song’ happens in the congregation in several ways, and can accomplish a range of things, some of which we now note.

## **CORPORATE SINGING**

Spontaneous singing, where each one in the congregation sings his own words and a melody that blends in with what everyone else is singing, is a corporate operation of the ‘new song’. This type of worship can be enhanced to reach great heights when skilful singers and musicians, moving by the Holy Spirit, combine to give a lead which the whole congregation follows. There are no limits to the modes of music that are available in this kind of singing. We may sing with or without a rhythm, in a minor or major key, slowly or quickly, or use styles that range from ancient to modern.



The benefits of this manner of worship are numerous. For instance, it is wonderful to sing a song which was originally someone else’s inspiration. But in the corporate ‘new song’ each is enabled to have his own unique expression, while contributing to the beauty and unity of the combined song. Because of its very nature, the ‘new song’ calls for a greater level of commitment, so the result is usually a greater intensity of worship.

Another great benefit of the corporate ‘new song’ is that it sets the stage for the operation of the solo singer or musician, or even duets, or trios, etc. It is quite common, after the initial waves of corporate singing have subsided, for those equipped by God for the task, to launch out on their own in a song theme that encapsulates the ‘mind of Christ’ for that phase of the meeting. Musical phrases or words are often introduced which the whole congregation can take up in a surge of united song that gathers everyone up in the original spontaneity. As well as being a great exercise in flowing together in unity, it heightens our awareness of the moving of the Holy Spirit.

We should note here also, that an orchestra of skilful musicians can also worship in the same manner, either backing the singers, or as a whole unit on its own.

## Prayer

A singer in the Body of Christ, when moved upon by the Holy Spirit to pray, may choose the option of either saying or singing that prayer, depending on what is appropriate. The precedent is set in many of the Psalms, most of which were firstly sung as ‘new songs’ by David, Asaph, Heman or Ethan, or their students as they operated in the office of singers in the Tabernacle or at Zion. Here are a few excerpts:

*“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come to you.” (Psalm 102:1)*

*“The prayers of David are ended.” (Psalm 72:20)*

*“I cry to the Lord with my voice, and to the Lord do I make supplication...” (Psalm 142:1)*

*“Deliver me, Lord, from evil men...” (Psalm 140:1).*

The whole of the last chapter of Habbakuk is described in the first verse as a ‘prayer’ and in the last verse as song to be accompanied on stringed instruments. In other words, it is a prophetic song of prayer.

## Thanksgiving

It is fitting on many occasions in a meeting for thankfulness to be spoken in testimony or prayer. It can also be appropriate for those with sufficient musical *skill to sing a ‘new song’ of thankfulness to the Lord.*

David did just that “on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies.” (2 Sam 22:1). Deborah and Barak did exactly the same, (Judges 5) as also did Jehoshaphat and his army after their victory. (see page 24\*\*\*\*\*)

## Communication

It is a medical fact that spoken language is interpreted in one part of the brain and music in another. Because music can communicate even without words it is known as the ‘international language’. God, in His wisdom, places both ways of communication at our disposal, so that in the Church He can speak clearly to us. A ‘new song’ is a particularly powerful mode of communication, especially in the area of prophecy. One of the responsibilities of David’s singers was ‘prophesy’ with their musical instruments, and much of the book of Psalms was created in this manner. (1 Chron 25), The ‘Messianic Psalms’ are an example of prophecy in song, e.g. Psalms 2 and 110. When those in the Church with singing capacity as well as a gift of prophecy combine both, the effectiveness of the communication is more than doubled.

Teaching and admonition can also happen in music. Paul instructed the Colossians, “*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.*” (Col 3:16). Many of the psalms are known as ‘didactic Psalms’, which means they were composed for the purpose of teaching. The title of Psalm 60 indicates it was one such psalm. The song of Moses is one of the earliest teaching songs, and was given to Moses as a ‘new song’. (Deut 31:19,22; 32). Others of the Psalms use the word ‘Maschil’ in their title, which means ‘a song for instruction’, e.g. Psalms 74, 78 and 89. Songs with words like “*Come let us sing to the Lord, let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our Salvation*” and “*Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good*” are obviously songs of exhortation and encouragement, as well as praise.

It is clear, then, that the ‘new song’ has tremendous benefit for the Church today, and can be enormously versatile in its style, presentation and circumstance.



## Chapter Four

# WORSHIP WINS WARS

Before the creation of man, the throne of God in heaven was covered with the worship and music of the ‘anointed cherub’, Lucifer. He was a magnificent creature of whom was said, *“you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty. Every precious stone was your covering ... the workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you<sup>3</sup> on the day you were created.”* (Ezek 28:12-13). He, like the rest of the angelic host, was created for worship to God and for service to man, (who was yet to be created). Lucifer had a most special status, and a place right in the throne room of God. As the angelic leader of music and song, he was equipped admirably for this purpose and his music was the apex of artistic and expressive beauty, and demonstrated consummate skill. He functioned by the anointing of God and understood the incredible power of music. A unique being indeed!

What a great tragedy then, when pride entered his heart because of his great beauty and ability. He became dissatisfied with his calling, lost

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<sup>3</sup> K.J.V. translates “in you”

his true sense of identity, and reached for something which was not his. Misusing his position and abilities, he convinced multitudes of the angels to join him in rebellion against God so that he could raise his throne above the heights of the cloud; above the stars of God; to sit on the mount of the congregation; to be ‘like’ God. In reality, he wanted to take the place that God has predestined for the Church.

God, therefore, banished him from ‘the mount of God’, cast him to the earth and stripped him of his anointing, place, calling, and glory. (Ezek 28:16, Luke 10:18). But despite this, Lucifer, who is now called ‘Satan’ or ‘the devil’, has not changed his intention. He is still self deceived and thinks to overthrow God and His people.

Understanding what Satan’s original calling and abilities were, helps us to see how worship, music and song function in the realm of the spiritual battle. One of the clearest illustrations comes out of the early life of David. (1 Sam 16:13, 14 etc).

## DAVID WINS BY PLAYING

King Saul, who had disobeyed God’s instructions to slay the Amalekites, was rejected by God from reigning over Israel. So Samuel was sent to the house of Jesse to anoint David to be king in his place. When Samuel poured the anointing oil on David’s head, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him to enable him to be king. But at the same moment, the Spirit of the Lord left Saul, and instead, he was troubled by an evil spirit. Saul would sit for hours in brooding depression till his servants said, “*Let our master command his servants to seek out a man who is a skilful player on the harp; ... he will play ... and you shall be well*” (1 Sam 16:16).

It was David who was summoned to this task, and whenever Saul was troubled, David simply played on the harp and *the “distressing spirit would depart from him.”* (1 Sam 16:23). WHY?

The answer rests in the combination of several elements. These were:

- David as a worshipper;

- the Spirit of the Lord upon David for kingship and authority; and
- the music which expressed all of this.

David's presence alone was not sufficient to drive the evil spirit away. His anointing and authority as the chosen king must find expression, and in this case, worship in music was the appropriate expression. As David, under the anointing, played quiet, soothing music in Saul's presence, it became to Satan a thunderous declaration that he was cast out of heaven, and has no more authority or anointing. But even more important is the fact that David's music expressed his own calling to kingship. Here was a contest of anointings, and it was David's anointing, expressed in his music, that carried the day.



This principle can still work for every Christian. In David's day, only ones like prophets, priests and kings enjoyed the anointing of God's Spirit. Only David was anointed to sit on the throne. But now, in the Church, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all who believe, and we have all been called to sit together with Christ in His throne. We can all worship the Lord (regardless of the quality of our voices). The power of anointed song is even more evident when we gather as the Body of Christ. David, in his day, was chosen to play to Saul because he was 'skilful', and in our day God has supplied to the Church many who are skilful in music. As the whole congregation is led in music and worship by these ones, satanic powers tremble with the declaration that Jesus is risen from the dead and is set on the throne of God in heaven, "*henceforth expecting till all enemies are put under his feet*" (Heb 10:13). Several vital things are declared in our song and music:

- that we are in heavenly places with Christ,
- that His anointing is upon us, and
- that Satan is cast out and has no more place amongst us as we gather. He cannot withstand such a declaration, and the battle is won in heavenly places.

## JHOSHAPHAT'S SINGING WARRIORS

Jehoshaphat discovered that the song of worship and praise was also a battle weapon against a physical army. (2 Chron 20). The Moabites, Ammorites and others were gathering to destroy Jerusalem, so Jehoshaphat assembled all Judah to the Lord's house in Jerusalem. As they all came, (the men, women and children), and prayed fervently for God's direction, God encouraged them with the words of the prophet who said, "*the battle is not yours but the Lord's ... you will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you.*" In response, all the people led by King Jehoshaphat, bowed in worship together. Then the Levites of the family of Heman<sup>4</sup> rose to praise the Lord with a "*loud voice on high.*" (2 Chron 20:15-19). The first stage of conquering had occurred - they had won the victory in the battle against fear. It is not wrong to experience fear (consider Noah who was "*moved with fear*" (Heb 11:7)) but we must eventually apply faith against such fear if we are to enjoy victory. Fear had brought them together, then in hearing and receiving God's word, they had overcome, and all that was left then was for the enemy to be defeated.

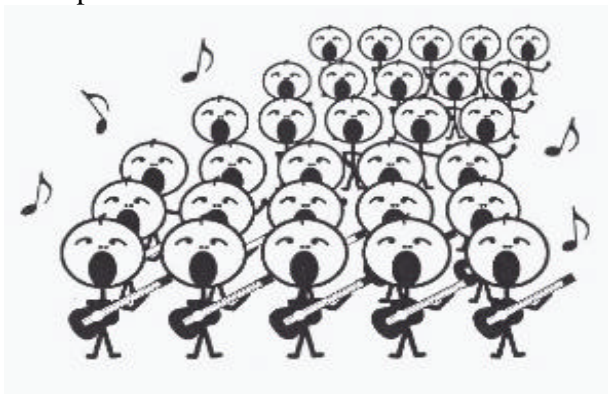
This was accomplished in a most dramatic and unusual way. Instead of planning a conventional battle where the archers behind softened up the enemy for the swordsmen to move in, etc, Joshua appointed singers to go out before his army, singing, "*Praise the Lord for His mercy endures forever.*" What a daring step of faith, especially for the singers in the front line. Imagine the scene. Instead of a sword, a guitar! Instead of a spear, a

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<sup>4</sup> One of the three patriarchs of song.

mouth organ! No psyched-up cry of battle rage - just a simple song of praise. To fill the role of those leading the army in song, a certain kind of faith, ability and obedience was required. That is why they were 'appointed' to the task, and it was their obedience that enabled the whole army to follow behind.

The result of their worship was that God intervened and made all three of the opposing armies fight one another until they were completely destroyed. When Judah arrived at the battleground their enemies were already dead and ready for plundering. Three days, it took, for them to gather the spoil, and on the fourth they assembled in the 'Valley of Blessing' to return to Jerusalem the same way they had left - with singing, rejoicing and worship.



Worship and song had won the battle. It had not been a casual, disorganised affair, for their success depended upon several vital factors:

- their gathering to the Lord's house, and to His Name;
- their prayer;
- the operation of the Holy Spirit and the Word of the Lord;
- their obedience of faith; and
- their worship and praise, led by the appointed singers and musicians. (2 Chron 20:1-28)

They conquered, firstly in themselves, then in heavenly places, and then God defeated their human enemy on the battle ground. Where Judah had found faith and victory and expressed it in song, the enemy had found disunity and defeat.

This is a key for the Church today. We have an arch-enemy, Satan and his hoards, and we have other non-personal enemies such as fear, sickness, apathy etc. But God gives us a Divine strategy in worship and its unity, whereby we can overcome. We are an **army** of worshippers more than we are individual worshippers. “*One shall chase a thousand*” but “*two shall put ten thousand to flight*” (Deut 32:30). One note played on an instrument may be beautiful, but when two notes are played in harmony they produce a third note simply by their combination. When we join together in worship our combined strength is far more than simply the addition of all our individual strengths.

Good music requires all the elements of relationship that God wants to see among His people. The harmony of our song of worship is an expression of the harmony of our hearts. Many things can disrupt the harmony of our hearts. Willfulness and immaturity in some can lead to musical exhibitionism or independence, while in others insecurities lead to withdrawal and non-participation. As we overcome these, we become an army in heavenly places, and with Jesus as the chief songleader among us, we go forward ‘conquering and to conquer’ (Psalm 22:22, Heb 2:12).

## **PRAISE IN PRISON**

Paul and Silas were thrown into gaol at Philippi for preaching the Gospel. (Acts 16:23-24). You can imagine how badly they must have felt after having been unjustly whipped with rods, then being thrown into the innermost dungeon, their feet fast in the stocks and forced to sit in agony on the stone floor in the darkness. This was real suffering and humiliation; so it took them a little while to gain the victory over their feelings. But at midnight while the other prisoners heard them praying and praising, God honoured their worship by sending an earthquake. All the doors were opened and the prisoners’ chains were loosed.

It is important to note where the victory began, and then where it extended to. These apostles firstly overcame the battle of their own feelings and circumstances. They were ‘true worshippers’. This led to the

freeing of all the prisoners and finally to the salvation of the gaoler and his family. As we become 'true worshippers' in all circumstances God makes us overcomers and brings His Salvation to many others.



We have seen that the cross of Christ was the greatest worship sacrifice of all time and eternity. The cross of Christ was also the greatest battle of all time and eternity, and it resulted in the greatest victory. What an image of meekness Jesus portrayed - *“a lamb led to the slaughter, a sheep dumb before her shearers”* (Isaiah 53:7). But what an incredible victory!

Worship has profound power in heaven and earth because it touches the principle of 'life out of death'. See how Jehoshaphat's singers, as they worshipped, faced possible death at the head of the army. Paul and Silas in prison faced the same principle. We overcome in all things by worship when it expresses the surrender of our whole lives and beings to God. The Bride of Christ in the book of Revelation overcame the dragon by *“the blood of the lamb, the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death”* (Rev 12:11).

Worship in all its expressions is an instrument of overcoming power.



## Chapter Five

# WORSHIP FREES GOD'S WORD

Have you ever been in a meeting where the declaring of the Word of God seemed bound or inhibited? Something seemed to be hindering the flow.

### **Elisha's minstrel**

A situation like this once occurred with Elisha when he was called upon to prophesy. (2 Kings 3). Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, who followed the Lord, and Jehoram, an evil king of backslidden Israel, had come together to fight a common enemy, Moab. Their battle strategy had put them in the desperate situation of having no water for their armies. While the evil king blamed God, saying God had brought them together to destroy them, Jehoshaphat wished to know what the Lord wanted. Eventually, they went to Elisha to hear what God would say through his prophecy. The reception they encountered from Elisha was quite abrupt.

*“Why don’t you enquire of the prophets of your father?”* he said to Jehoram. *“If it wasn’t that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, I wouldn’t even look at you or acknowledge your presence”* Quite a terse situation! It would be most difficult to prophesy or to be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit in such a negative atmosphere.

Elisha knew this, so he called for a minstrel, and as the music and song rang out *“the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha”* and he prophesied. The flow of God’s word was released by the music of the minstrel.

It was the same in the case of Saul. On a journey looking for his father’s donkeys, Saul was met by the prophet Samuel, who anointed him with oil in preparation for his coronation as the first king of Israel. This came as a great surprise to Saul, who was a quiet, retiring person. So Samuel, as a confirmation to Saul, prophesied what would transpire that day. He said *“You will meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, a taboret, a pipe and a harp before them; and they shall prophesy.”* These men would be prophesying in song! Samuel went on to say, *“the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you shall prophesy with them, and you shall be turned into another man.”* True to Samuel’s word, this and other signs came to pass that day, and, so marked was the musical prophecy in Saul that onlookers marvelled and exclaimed *“Is Saul among the prophets?”* In both Saul’s and Elisha’s cases, music and the anointing of God’s Holy Spirit had combined to release the flow of the Word of God. It was a spectacular musical occurrence.

In gatherings of the Church this same principle can operate. In obedience to Psalm 100 we *“enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise”*. As we *“come before Him”* and *“bring an offering”* of praise, and as we pour out our worship in song together, several things take place.

- The battle in heavenly places is won.
- The battle in our own hearts is won as we believe and humble ourselves before God
- The flow of the Word of God is released as the anointing of the Holy Spirit finds expression in the song of praise and worship.

## **Twenty-four elders**

This process is consistent with the scene in Revelation 4 & 5. John was weeping because the book was sealed and no one was found worthy to open it. The one of the twenty-four elders, seated around the throne of God, declared, "*The Lion of the tribe of Judah, of the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book.*" When John looked he saw the Lamb of God standing, yet looking as if He had been slain, and on Him rested the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the form of seven horns and seven eyes. He took the sealed book to open it, and immediately the four living ones and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, and they all joined together, to the sound of the harp that each of them held, in a 'new song' of worship. It was only after this torrent of music and 'new song' that the Lamb proceeded to reveal the contents of the sealed book! Worship preceded revelation.

It is the task of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. (John 14:26; 16:13). As part of this process He enables and inspires those who worship, and in this way He prepares their hearts for the entry of His Word while, at the same time, silencing the voice of the devil.



## Chapter Six

# INDIVIDUALS OR A BODY?

Paul frequently used the very powerful analogy of the ‘Body’ to describe the people of God, because many individuals were to become one in this kind of relationship. In our human bodies every part has an individuality and uniqueness about it. Yet if all those various parts were to function independently we would not get on very well. Imagine the legs wanting to go in different directions, or the mouth failing to open when the hand brought food to it! It is the same in the Body of Christ. While each of us has a precious, unique personal identity as a new creature in Christ, we must never forget that we are designed by God to operate together. Without each other we cannot function properly, nor can we reach the goal that God has set for us. In functioning, we have been made to depend on each other. Apart from each other, we die.

So the primary message of Paul’s analogy of the ‘Body’ is unity, and few things please God more than this.

When we are gathered for worship we seek the highest level of unity, so that the blessing of Psalm 133 may be seen among us.

*“Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head (Jesus) that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, that ran down to the skirts of his garments (every member of the Body)...for there the Lord commanded the blessing”*

Consider carefully the following passage from Ephesians 2.

verse 5 “... even when we were dead in trespasses, (He) made us alive **together** with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”,

verse 6 “and raised us up **together** and made us sit **together** in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”.

verse 21 “In Whom all the building being joined **together** grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”

Whenever we worship in song in the Body of Christ, that worship must happen **together**. Imagine an orchestra in which all the various instruments had been given music for different symphonies. If they all began to play at the same time, what pandemonium would result! Or imagine, even if they all had the same music but began at different speeds or in different keys. What a racket! An orchestra, if it is to succeed, needs all the elements of unity - tuned instruments, same music, a conductor, etc.

Our worship in song is the same.



When we are at home we can try to respond to God in any way we feel. If we are feeling down we can cry out to Him. If we are joyful we may sing or even shout. (Driving in a car is a good place for this). We may pray fervently or even dance a little. Some even like to ‘rest’ in the Lord.

All of this is wonderful as part of our individual relationship and expression to God. (See the illustration above).

But when we come to church we cannot ‘do our own thing’ as we do at home. Imagine the scenario depicted in the following illustration. A congregation where all attempt to worship simultaneously in their own particular modes - some singing, some shouting, others weeping or leaping. How much this would be like the orchestra we have just described! Yet, probably all of us have been in meetings where exactly this has occurred. Each one does what they feel, and though he may give thanks well, others are not edified and the voice of God is not heard in the Church. Visitors may even wonder if we are all mad.<sup>5</sup> So when we come together as the Body of Christ, we must decide to function as such. We must endeavour to move together as **One**. Our musical worship must be skilful and expressive of the mind of Christ. Two of the great emphases of King David’s order were unity and skill in worship. That is why he instructed them to “*sing to the Lord a new song, play skillfully with a loud noise.*” (*Psalm 33:3*).

How can we do this?



## DAVID’S DIVINE ORDER

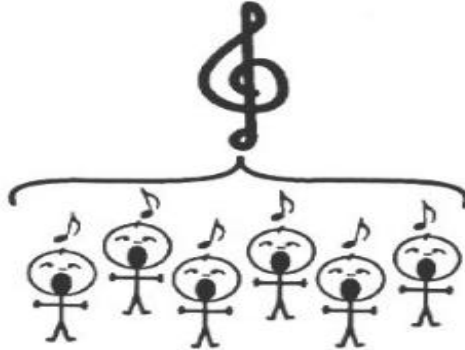
There is a place for everyone in our corporate worship in song. God tells us now to “*enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise*” (*Psalm 100:4*). This applies to all of us.

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<sup>5</sup> Free translation of 1 Cor 14:17,23

But what about those who feel, ‘I can’t sing very well. How can I be expected to worship in song?’

This is where God provides the answer in His body. There are those amongst us to whom God has given musical and singing ability. Many of these are called to leadership in our corporate worship. In Israel’s history this was evident. For instance, the song that all Israel sang at the Red Sea was a ‘new song’ sung by ‘all Israel’ and led by Moses. The women who followed in dance and song were led by Moses’ sister Miriam.



When Hezekiah restored worship in the temple after years of Israel’s backsliding, he “*commanded them to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began the song of the Lord also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments ... so all the congregation worshipped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had finished the offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshipped.*” (2 Chron 29:20-36). Here was leadership that enabled everyone to participate. Here were appointed singers and musicians who were trained and committed to their task.

## **Disorder brings death**

The source of Hezekiah’s order of music is found almost 300 years earlier in his great, great grandfather King David, who established the order of music and worship for the temple. David had arrived at his understanding of God’s order first through painful experience in his early efforts to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Zion (1 Chron 13; 15), and then

through the direct revelation of God to him. (1 Chron 28:11-19). His first attempt to bring the Ark to Zion ended in terrible failure.

A generation earlier the Ark of the Covenant had been captured by the Philistines. But God soon made it uncomfortable for them to keep it by sending plagues among them. The Philistines decided to return the Ark, so they placed it on a cart drawn by a pair of cows which had been newly separated from their calves. The cows ignored their distraught calves, and, without being led or coerced, set off towards the land of Israel taking the Ark with them. This had been a miracle. (1 Sam 6:10-12).



So, when David prepared to bring the Ark to Zion, he set it upon a cart, as the Philistines has done. At first a marvellous spectacle unfolded as crowds of singing people milled around the Ark, full of joy and good intentions. God was among them again and they were delighted. Anyone who had an instrument played it while everyone else *sang* “*with all their might*”. There was no half-heartedness here! They wanted to worship and praise the God they loved so much.

But, suddenly, death struck!

The oxen stumbled. Uzza, who was driving the cart, reached out to steady the Ark, and was immediately struck dead by God. You can imagine the rest. The singing and celebration would have ceased abruptly. Dumbfounded, no one would move a muscle. Then the questions would come. How could this be? Why should God be so displeased? Surely He should be pleased with our worship?

## The true order

The answer was not given till three months later when David decided, a second time, to bring the Ark back. By then he had realised what had gone wrong the first time. He said, “*God broke out against us because we did not consult Him about the true order.*” (1 Chron 15:13).

David’s first mistake had been to ignore God’s order, and to consult with the people instead of God’s Word. Notice the phrases used in describing that first event: “*If it seems good to you*” and “*the thing was right in the eyes of all of the people*” (1 Chron 13:2,4).

His second mistake had been to copy the Philistines by carrying the Ark on a cart. The Ark of God’s Presence was never intended to be carried on a man-made device. It was to be carried on the shoulders of those anointed for the task.

His third mistake had been in failing to set up the order for the singers and musicians. Enthusiasm alone was not enough.

## True worship order for today

We are now living in a time in history where God is restoring His Church in true worship and in all other aspects of full maturity. It would be easy, in our enthusiasm, to make the same mistakes that David did, by ignoring the order that God wants for His Body. The good ideas of men, and popular ways of doing things should not dictate the way in which we worship, especially when it comes to worship in song. Tradition is not necessarily God’s order; neither is blind zeal. In the same way that David should have placed the Ark on the shoulders of men anointed as priests, we must ensure that God’s presence is carried and expressed **in us** as we gather. God’s anointing does not rest in our fine instruments, whether pipe organ or synthesizer. It does not rest upon the style of music we may choose, whether reverent liturgy or modern up-tempo music. Neither does it rest in spectacular events we may organise for God. If we depend on all of these mechanics for worship, then they become like David’s cart. But God’s glory is expressed **in people** - in all of us together as the Body of Christ. We are all priests to God, and the Holy Spirit rests within and

upon us. We have the Glory of God in 'earthen vessels' and we can come boldly right into God's presence, and worship in song.



On David's second attempt to bring the Ark to Zion he was careful to appoint singers and musicians to their places. (1 Chron 15:16). The first three singers named were Asaph, Heman and Ethan (or Jeduthun) who also played the cymbals. With them were fourteen others 'of second rank'. Eight others were appointed to play the higher pitched stringed instruments (alamoth), six were appointed to play the lower strings (sheminith, literally the 'octave') and seven priests blew the trumpets. In charge of the whole operation was Chenaniah, because he was skilful in music and song. *'Thus all Israel brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps' (1 Chron 15:28)*

In the Church today, order in our worship comes firstly as each one, whose life is given to God, decides to worship; and then as each one takes his rightful place either participating as a singer or musician, or responding within the whole congregation. Music leaders place in the hands of the whole congregation the musical tools for worship - the tools of beat, key, speed, mode and, very often, word content. Our spirit witnesses within us when music leaders are functioning by the Holy Spirit, because it is a demonstration of His anointing. The God-given ability in each singer is being offered for the 'body', and as they function the whole congregation is lifted to heights of musical worship that would be otherwise inaccessible. All the uninhibited joy that David and Israel displayed on that day can be ours today in the Church.

The key, once again, is unity, and the elements of unity are:

- worshipful hearts;
- the anointing of the Holy Spirit;
- leadership functioning;
- congregation being attentive to the lead; and
- uninhibited flowing together.

## **David's Heavenly Vision**

King David's attention to the order of God in worship did not cease on the day that he brought the Ark to Zion where he had pitched a tent for it. He had in mind something far more magnificent and enduring. He wanted a permanent home for the Ark.

Because of this desire, God had given David an incredible experience in which he was caught up by the Holy Spirit to view the order of God's temple in heavenly places. (1 Chron 28:11-13, 19). It was all there in clear view for David as he saw the same order that Abraham and Moses had seen before him, and that Ezekiel would see after him. It was the same order that the Apostles Paul and John would see a thousand years later. He must have seen the twenty-four thrones around God's throne, and the twenty-four harps held by those on those thrones. He would have thrilled to the sound of the continual 'new song' echoing around this timeless realm. He would have viewed the heavenly altar of incense with its worship and prayer ascending before God's throne. The exquisite sound of the priestly trumpets declaring the kingship and authority of God, and the song which rose and fell like waves on a mighty ocean of worshipping people, would have held him enraptured. He understood the person of that divine high priest, Melchisedec, Who officiates in the heavenly temple, and Who directs all worship accordingly. (Psalm 110).

## **Plans for the temple**

As a result of his experience, David drew up plans for the temple, which, at the end of his life, he entrusted to Solomon. These plans gave all

the details of the whole temple order including, not only the building itself but also the divisions for the priests, Levites, porters, and singers.

Then, though he knew he would not build the temple himself, David began preparing the materials for its construction. He commissioned great stones to be quarried, hewn and polished. He had cedars brought from Lebanon, and gold and silver laid up in abundance, and all this he paid for himself, out of the king's treasury.

## The order of singers

But his preparation did not stop at plans, finance and building materials. He also appointed the three fathers of song, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, to begin the preparation of a group of two hundred and eighty-eight singers, who, when the temple was built, would be arranged in twenty-four teams of twelve. Night and day these twenty-four 'courses' would eventually take an hour of duty each, in the temple, to "*prophesy with harps and stringed instruments and cymbals*" (1 Chron 25:1) continually. To be groomed as the leaders of these teams were the twenty-four sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. A further four thousand were also set aside as another gigantic choir. (1 Chron 23:5).

So, in preparation for the coming temple, Asaph was placed on duty in Zion, before the Ark, and with him were a number of other appointed singers and musicians. (1 Chron 16:4-6). At Gibeon, where the tabernacle of Moses was pitched, David appointed Heman and Jeduthun with another group of singers to praise the Lord day and night. (1 Chron 16:37-42). These singing musicians worshipped in music all the life time of David, and during this time they wrote psalms, and trained their sons in David's order of worship. It was a time of great preparation over many years as they looked forward to the wonderful day of the dedication of Solomon's temple. (1 Chron 6:31,32). All their preparation came to fruition, and twenty-four courses of singers and musicians praised the Lord every day, around the clock.

One of the main features of this preparation period was the operation of those who **taught** others how to function in the Song of the Lord. These men were '**fathers** in song' whose sons and daughters *were* "*under the*

*hand of their father for song*” (1 Chron 25:6; Neh 12:45,46), and, as a result, they became very skilful. David, himself, was notable for his musical skill, and his love for worship, and it was this aspect of his life that he was able to ‘father’ in those around him. Skill, to him, was not just the basis of an ‘ego trip’, it was the means by which his whole being could pour out worship to the God he loved with so much passion. King David was a ‘true worshipper’.

There are numerous references in the Bible to skill and beauty in music, and it is exciting to note the wide variation of music that was employed. (Psalm 33:1-3; 66:2; 147:1; 1 Chron 34:12).

- The **specialisation** of each vocal range was clear when David brought the ark to Zion. This is also seen in several of the Psalms. (Psalm 6, 12 (Sheminith); Psalm 46 (Alamoth)).
- **Various rhythms** are also called for at different times. Whenever they danced a rhythm was required.<sup>6</sup> Marching music has a very definite rhythm, and would have been used by Jehoshaphat’s singers. (2 Chron 20:21).
- **Dynamics** and mood are also indicated in Biblical singing. Sometimes it was loud (Psalm 33:3, Neh 12:42), while at other times it was plaintive or thoughtful. (Psalm 9:16b, Psalm 7 title, Hab 3:1). Often the music was solemn or mournful (Psalm 92:3, Psalm 53 (Mahalath - mournful), and sometimes the opposite.
- **Responsive singing** was widely used not only by David’s singers<sup>7</sup> but also by Ezra and Nehemiah at the restoration of the temple and the walls. (Ezra 3:11, Neh 12:24, 31, 40). The first song of scripture was sung responsively as Miriam answered the other maidens as they danced and sang. (Ex 15:21).
- A **duet** was sung by Deborah and Barak after the defeat of their enemy. (Judges 5).

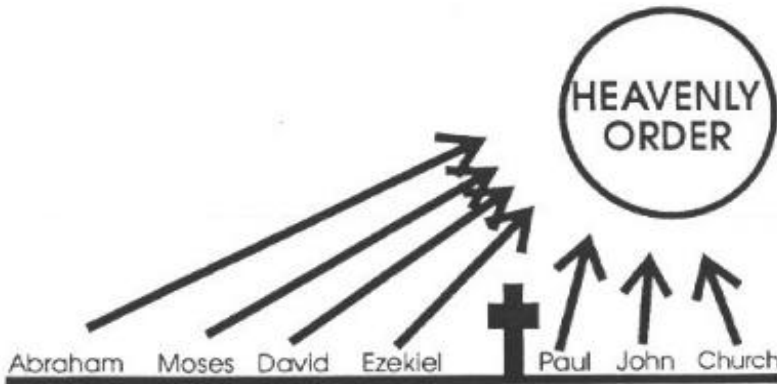
The end result of all David’s preparation was evident on the day that Solomon dedicated the temple. The twenty-four sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, and their teams were all clothed in white linen, standing

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<sup>6</sup> Ex 15:21 (Miriam at the Red Sea); 1 Chron 15:29 (David before the Ark); Luke 15:25 (the return of the prodigal son).

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 88 title, Leanoth - for response.

with their instruments near the altar. With them were one hundred and twenty priests with trumpets. *“It came to pass when the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord ... the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.”* (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron 5:12-14). Here was perfect unity in the music and song of worship and praise! Here was the glory of the Lord!



But is it right to take the pattern which David established a thousand years before Christ, and apply it today? The answer is simple. No. We do not seek to transfer an Old Testament order past the cross of Christ into our day. We do not take David’s order as such, for it was only a copy of the heavenly order. It was the same heavenly scene that Moses, Ezekiel, John and Paul have also seen. In finding the pattern for worship in the Church today, we also go to the same source that David did, and apply its principles in our own day.

We can also apply these same heavenly principles that David put into operation, to see the growth and development of our song of worship in the Church. David’s order demonstrates that fatherhood in song, and families of song, are vital in bringing to maturity the flow of musical praise. Instruction that leads to skill is paramount, and those under instruction must be dedicated to their purpose.

The spectacular event at the opening of Solomon's temple was only a foretaste of what God is preparing for the Church when God brings her to perfection. Just as David's singers reached an apex in musical worship and unity after many years of on-the-job-training, so God is preparing us now for an incredible climax of worship that, with the glory of God, will fill the last day Church. She will attain to the ultimate in worship 'in spirit and in truth' as she pours out love to Christ, her Bridegroom, and to God. Her priesthood will have reached its everlasting zenith as she is joined to her High Priest in marriage. She will have perfected her articulation of the 'worship' of God as she fills the True Temple with music of His praise. No music on earth today will compare to the sheer beauty and power of that music, for its source, intent and content are totally Divine.

Let us now apply ourselves to being 'true worshippers' in the sure hope that we will all participate in the glorious dedication of the True temple, the Church.

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