

## **Lecture #3 – Music and the Bible – Part I**

### **I. Prominence of Music in Scripture**

The Bible is a musical book. The largest book (Psalms) is the songbook for the nation of Israel. Music can be found from Genesis to Revelation.

### **II. Musical Survey of the Old Testament**

This list is not exhaustive to all references to music, but it should illustrate the pervasiveness of music in the Bible.

#### **Pentateuch**

Genesis 4:21 – Jubal was the father of instrumental music (strings and wind).

Genesis 31:27 – Laban mentions music as used to celebrate a parting of friends.

Exodus 15:1-19 – Moses leads Israel in singing a song celebrating deliverance at the Red Sea

Exodus 15:20-21 – Miriam leads in singing.

Exodus 32:18 – The people sang as they worshipped the Golden Calf.

Numbers 21:17-18 – Singing at the well of Beer-elim

Deuteronomy 32:1-43 – The Farewell Song of Moses

#### **Historical Books**

Judges 5:1-5 – Deborah and Barak sing a song of victory.

Judges 11:34 – The tragic celebration of Jephthah's daughter.

I Samuel 10:5 – A company of prophets have instruments.

I Samuel 16:15-16 – The effect of music on the spirit of Saul

I Samuel 18:6-7 – Women sing a song of victory after David defeats Goliath.

II Samuel 19:35 – Barzillai says he cannot hear the singing of men or women.

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I Kings 1:40-41 – Music is part of the celebration of anointing Solomon as next king.

I Kings 10:12 – Solomon made instruments for Temple music.

I Chronicles 6:31-47 – Roster of Levite singers.

I Chronicles 15:16 – Music celebrates the arrival of the Ark at Jerusalem.

I Chronicles 15:19-22 – The musicians of the Levites.

I Chronicles 23:5 – 4,000 members in Temple orchestra.

I Chronicles 25:1-31 – The organization of the Temple musicians.

II Chronicles 5:11-13 – Music as Ark was placed in the Temple.

II Chronicles 7:6 – Music in the dedication of the Temple

II Chronicles 9:11 – Solomon makes instruments (I Kings 10:12)

II Chronicles 23:13 – Music celebrating the anointing of Joash as king.

II Chronicles 29:25-29 – Music as part of revival of Temple worship under Hezekiah

Ezra 3:10-11 – Music at dedication of Second Temple.

Nehemiah 12:24 – Music leaders of Second Temple.

Nehemiah 12:27-31 – Music at dedication of wall of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 12:42 – Temple singers named.

### Poetical Books

Job 21:12 – Music as part of the mirth of the wicked.

Job 30:31 – Music used in mourning.

Psalms – TOO MANY TO LIST HERE!

Proverbs 25:20 – Power of music to make low emotions even lower.

Ecclesiastes 2:8 – Music as part of the pleasures Solomon tried.

### Prophetical Books

Isaiah 5:12 – Music as part of the revels of the wicked.

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Isaiah 14:11 – Music as part of the splendor of Babylon

Isaiah 16:10 – Music as part of the joy that was removed in judgment.

Isaiah 23:16 – Music as a tool of the harlot.

Isaiah 24:8-9 – Music as part of the joy that was removed in judgment.

Isaiah 30:29 – Jews would sing after fall of Assyria.

Isaiah 30:32 – Music celebrating as Assyria fell.

Jeremiah 31:4 – Dancing as part of joy.

Ezekiel 26:13 – Music as part of the joy that was removed in judgment.

Ezekiel 28:13 – Music and King of Tyre / Satan

Ezekiel 33:32 – Illustration of beautiful music that is heard but not understood.

Ezekiel 40:44 – A place designated for singers in Ezekiel's Temple.

Daniel 3:4-7,10,15 – Description of Babylonian orchestra.

Amos 5:23 – God can reject our songs.

Amos 6:5 – The Jews were creating new music that did not honor God.

Amos 8:10 – Judgment changes songs of joy to mourning.

Habakkuk 3:1-19 – A song or prayer of Habakkuk

## **II. Musical Survey of the New Testament**

### **Gospels and Acts**

Matthew 9:23 – Music used in mourning or funeral.

Matthew 11:16-17 – Illustration of children playing using music.

Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26 – Christ and disciples sang, probably the *Hallel* from Psalm 113-118.

Acts 2:46 – Paul and Silas sang in the jail at Philippi

### Epistles of Paul

I Corinthians 14:15 – Singing (with understanding) as part of church worship.

Ephesians 5:19 – Music in the life of the believer.

Colossians 3:16 – Music in the life of the believer.

### General Epistles

Hebrews 2:12 – Singing as public testimony.

James 5:13 – Singing psalms in times of joy.

### Revelation

Revelation 14:2-3 – Music at the entrance of the Lamb and the 144,000

Revelation 18:22 - Music as part of the joy that was removed in judgment.

### **III. Hebrew Poetry**

It is sometimes difficult for a modern English-speaking reader to recognize and appreciate Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry is a very different style that we are used to. It is not built on rhythm and rhyming schemes like our poetry is.

One of the challenges is even in identifying portions of Scripture that are meant to be poetic. The ancient Hebrew texts have no method to indicate there is poetry present. For example: perhaps the first poem in the Bible is the words of Lamech in Genesis 4:23-24, but we only recognize this from identifying the style as poetry.

#### **Parallelism**

“The fundamental law of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, which is also very frequently found in the other books which are not classed as poetical.” - A.C. Gaebelein

Hebrew poetry is built on a system of *parallelism*. It is the interaction of two, and sometimes three (in the case of Lamentations 1-3), ideas. B.H. Carroll describes it as “one line corresponds in thought to another line.”

B.H. Carroll notes that there are three primary forms of parallelism are a few less frequent ones:

#### **Synonymous**

“a second line simply repeats in slightly altered phraseology the thought of the first line.”

Examples: Psalm 2:4, Proverbs 1:18

#### **Antithetic**

“the second line is in contrast with the first.”

Examples: Psalm 20:8, Proverbs 10:1

#### **Synthetic/Constructive**

“the second line supplements the first, both together giving a complete thought.”

Examples: Proverbs 1:10, 3:27

#### **Climatic**

“the second line takes up words from the first and completes them.”

Examples: Psalm 29:1, Judges 5:7

### **Introverted**

“the first line corresponds with the fourth, and the second with the third.”

Examples: Psalm 123:1-2, Proverbs 23:15

### **Emblematic**

“the second line brings forward something similar to the first, but in a higher realm.”

Examples: Proverbs 25:14, 26:20-21

### **Other Characteristics**

Lines of Hebrew poetry can be grouped in stanzas or strophes based on common subject or thought. This can be found in as few as two lines (Proverbs 13:1) to sixteen lines in the sections of Psalm 119.

A common technique is the chiasm, which is a “mirror” structure (such as in ABBA or ABCCBA). Psalm 51:1 is an example of this structure.:

A - “Have mercy upon me, O God,”

B – “according to thy lovingkindness:”

B – “according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies”

A – “blot out my transgressions.”

Sometimes the lines of poetry are arranged as acrostics using the Hebrew alphabet. The most famous example is Psalm 119, but other examples include Psalms 25, 34, 37, 111, 145, and Lamentations 1-4.