

A cappella: God's Music

The word *A cappella*, or simply *acappella*, is defined as “music without instrumental accompaniment.” The root word is from the Italian language and means “in the manner of the church, or chapel.” It is in contrast to the word Cantata, which means accompanied singing.

If I were to ask you what kind of music you like best, you might respond with jazz, bluegrass, rock-and-roll, classical, rhythm-and-blues, barbershop or some other genre. To each his own. There is no wrong answer, for everyone has their own individual preference in music. But so does God. Just as you can't know what music I like unless I tell you, neither can we know what God likes unless He tells us (read carefully I Corinthians 2:10-11). Well, God, through the Spirit, has told us. It is *acappella*, music using man's vocal chords, sung by plucking on the heart in worship to God. All that we know in the NT about God's favorite music is revealed:

*“And when they had **sung** a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives”* (Mt 26:30)

*“And when they had **sung** a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives”* (Mk 14:26)

*“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing** hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them”* (Ac 16:25)

*“as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And **sing** to Your name”* (Rom 15:9)

*“What is the conclusion then? ... I will **sing** with the spirit, and I will also **sing** with the understanding”* (I Cor. 14:15)

*“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a **psalm**, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification”* (I Cor. 14:26)

*“**speaking** to one another in **psalms** and **hymns** and **spiritual songs**, **singing** and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:19)

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in **psalms** and **hymns** and **spiritual songs**, **singing** with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Col. 3:16)

*“saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will **sing** praise to You”* (Heb. 2:12)

*“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the **sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the **fruit of our lips**, giving thanks to His name”* (Heb. 13:15)

*“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him **sing psalms**”* (Jam. 5:13)

This is every verse the Spirit has told us regarding God's preference in music. For centuries after the establishment of the church followers of the Bible sang *acappella*. Did you know that Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley and most all reformers were vehemently opposed to instrumental music? When men began adding to God's word, Jesus said *“In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matt. 15:9). Instrumental music is just such a man-made doctrine. Regarding such inventions the silence of God is deafening! Those who love God will be content with the genre of music He revealed. He said *“sing.”* So, let us sing and be happy, content that we can know this pleases Him.

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