

people throughout the centuries have been Psalm singers. Not only did the primitive church sing psalms, but they were sung during the Protestant Reformation and even to our present time. The Reformation not only gave the Word of God back to the common man, but it also gave back the singing of the Psalms. Before the Reformation there had been a decline of Psalms singing but there was a renewed interest in this area by the preaching of God's Word through men such as John Calvin and John Knox. There have been a number of saints over the centuries who loved God's Word by reading and singing it (Huguenots, Waldensnes, Scottish Covenantors, Martyrs, Crusaders, Reformers, Pilgrims, Puritans, etc.). The Psalms were sung throughout Europe and even in America. There were many churches such as the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and the Reformed Church that sang the Psalms exclusively. They viewed the Psalms as being superior to any human hymns and thereby sang only Scripture in public worship. Many Psalters were printed throughout France, England, Scotland, Germany, and America. The first book printed in the colonies in America was the Bay Psalms Book by the Puritans. The Psalms in metrical version actually became the handbook of most churches during the Reformation. It appears to me, from my studies, that the church was the strongest during the time when emphasis was placed on the singing of the Psalms.

THE TESTIMONY OF TIME

The Psalms have outlived all other hymn

books. They have stood the test of time in every way. The Psalms are still loved by God's people and read probably more than any other Old Testament book. The Psalms have brought much comfort, peace, joy, and satisfaction to the hearts of many in times of trouble, persecution, and pain. The Psalms cover every aspect of life and meet every need. The Psalms will lift the heart up like nothing else can. This is why God has commanded us to read and sing from this part of the Scriptures.

In Conclusion

According to **John 4:20-24**, we are told that our worship must be in spirit and truth. That is, our worship must be in accordance with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Our worship must be God approved. We are not allowed to worship any way we please. We are not to offer strange fire (**Leviticus 10:1-2**) nor use the world's methods (**II Chronicles 26:16-21**) in our worship. The Spirit of God and the Word of God are so closely related that the Bible refers to the "Spirit of truth" in **John 16:13**. Only that worship which proceeds from the Spirit through His Word is pleasing to God. Please consider the kind of songs we are to sing in our worship to God. Amen.



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"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Acts 16:31

The RICHES OF GRACE

ROBERT W. REED
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"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

PSALMS SINGING

"Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works."

I Chronicles 16:9

+ A Defense For Singing The Psalms +

The Book of Psalms is placed in the heart of the Bible as a hymnbook for all God's people. The Psalter is a divinely appointed manual of praise. This songbook is a part of inspired Scripture and is without spot or blemish. The church has sung the Psalms for over two thousand years. The singing of Biblical Psalms has helped shape and mold the character and piety of God's people. These songs of Zion are superior to any uninspired song composed by man. The church has been the strongest at those times when its emphasis was placed on the reading and singing of the Scriptures. The Psalms are the church's perfect hymnbook and nothing can be compared to them. The Psalms were intended to be sung in public worship and no one has the authority to substitute anything for the singing of God's Word. Amen.

"When we sing them, we are certain that God has put the words in our mouth as if He Himself sang within us to exalt His glory."

John Calvin

This article is written as a defense for singing the Psalms. The church has come a long way, from singing the Psalms to singing love songs to the LORD. The following is a brief outline:

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

David is called the sweet psalmist in **II Samuel 23:1**. He wrote most of the Psalms in the book of Psalms. In **I Chronicles 16:9**, when bringing the Ark of God back to its rightful place, David exhorted the people to sing Psalms, “*Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.*” This entire chapter is basically a Psalm of thanksgiving to God and these words will be found in a number of places in the book of Psalms. Also, in **II Chronicles 29**, as Hezekiah restored worship in Israel, music played an essential part and the Psalms (words of David) were sung (especially **verses 25-30**). In **Psalm 95:2**, we are told to sing Psalms, “*Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*” Other references to singing the Psalms are in **Psalms 81:2, 105:2**.

In **Luke 24:44**, the Psalms are part of Holy Scripture, “*And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*”, and according to **II Timothy 3:16**, all Scripture is inspired (God-breathed) and profitable to us. The Psalms are sufficient and lack nothing for they are the very Word of God. If we are commanded to sing the Psalms, then who of us has the authority to substitute anything else for singing the Word of God. Other

references to the importance of music among God’s people are **II Chronicles 35:15-16, Ezra 3:10-11, Nehemiah 12:24-26**.

THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORY

History testifies to the fact that God’s people were a Psalms singing people, that is, they read and sang from Holy Scripture. We have already established the fact that the church in the Old Testament sang Psalms in worship. The church in the New Testament had it’s beginning singing Psalms also. In **James 5:13**, we are told, “*Is any merry, let him sing Psalms.*” The Lord Jesus and His disciples sang from the Psalms in the Upper Room according to **Matthew 26:30**, “*And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*” The word hymn in the text refers to the Scriptures (**Psalms**). It is believed by most scholars that the Jews sang **Psalm 113-118** at Passover. If this is true, how appropriate would it have been that our Lord sang especially **Psalm 118** the night before His sacrifice as the Lamb of God, **verse 17**, “*I shall die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.*”, and **verse 25**, “*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*” Hymns, as we know them today, were few and far between in the first three centuries, except for something like the song of Clement of Alexander (200 A.D.). There is no indication in Scripture that hymns apply to uninspired songs. Many, over the centuries have called the Psalter a hymnal. Several dictionaries identify Psalms as hymns and in the Septuagint, Psalms, hymns, and songs are interchangeable. If the hymn Jesus sang is not from Holy Scripture, then

what hymn did He sing? Is this hymn used in the church today, and who wrote it, and why did our Lord choose this particular hymn?

God’s people are commanded to sing the Psalms in **Ephesians 5:19**, “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*” and **Colossians 3:16**, “*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.*” The words of Christ are closely connected with the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in our text. The psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs cannot be understood in our modern usage. Our modern definition of hymns would be extra-Biblical songs of praise. But in the book of **Ephesians** and **Colossians**, the readers of the letters understood that these psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are spiritual (inspired) and are contained in the Word of God. The Apostle Paul is not referring to something found outside of Scripture when referring to these three terms. There is no evidence of uninspired hymns at this time in the first century. The word spiritual in our text means “given by the spirit” or “proceeding from the Spirit.” The psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in the text are of divine origin. Basically, these three terms refer to the book of Psalms which are part of the inspired Word of God. Please note that speaking in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is sequel of being filled with the spirit (**Ephesians 5:18-19**).

In considering the testimony of history, God’s