

Singing in the Spirit

This is a beautiful subject in itself. But when looked at in depth, we find something even more beautiful. It is yet another example of how, through the Spirit, heaven may be brought down to earth.

Singing in the Spirit in the NT

One of the effects of being filled with the Spirit is to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph 5.18–20). Clearly, such singing will be strongly imbued with the same Spirit who gave rise to it in the first place.

(Very significantly, the Word of Christ dwelling richly in our hearts produces exactly the same effect (Col 3.16). The indwelling Word has the same effect as the indwelling Spirit. Why? The Spirit and the Word are one (Jn 6.63; Eph 6.17; 2 Tim 3.15).)

The Bible says we are not to be ignorant concerning the things of the Spirit (1 Cor 12.1).

This includes singing in the Spirit.

- We may sing with the understanding and we may sing with the spirit (1 Cor 14.15).
- This verse is not referring to singing with or without the Anointing, but whether we sing in our native language or in an unknown tongue.

It was common in Corinth for all to have a psalm when they met together (1 Cor 14.26).

- The context does not imply that they simply read an OT Psalm.
- Rather, the same Anointing which inspired the OT psalms was upon the Corinthian believers, giving birth to new compositions having the same character and Spirit.

The music of heaven on earth

One of the most beautiful features of such singing is that it is not only the **words** but also the **music** of heaven on earth.

- Col 3.16 & Eph 5.18-20 both speak of making **melody** in the heart as well as singing.
- So, when filled with the Spirit, He not only inspires the **words** of the spiritual songs but also their **music/tune**.

This is another example of how to taste the heavenly gift is to experience a foretaste of heaven itself, and how a believer full of the Holy Ghost can reproduce heaven on earth.

- Men have heard the music of heaven (e.g. Lk 2.13-14; Rev 5.11-13; 14.2-3; 19.1-6).
- Such things are indescribable. Just as Paul told of hearing words that were unspeakable (2 Cor 12.4), John heard songs that were "un-learnable".
- But how unspeakably more glorious not only to **hear** the songs and music of heaven but, when filled with the Spirit, to **utter** them.
- Yet since we may speak in heavenly tongues (1 Cor 13.1) and partake of the heavenly gift (Heb 6.4), the Holy Ghost, why should it seem strange for heavenly music as well as words to fill the mouths of men on earth?

The link between prophecy/prophets and music & song in the OT temple choir

David was spiritually and musically endowed. The Spirit of the Lord upon him when playing the harp was so powerful it could drive away evil spirits (1 Sam 16.23).

There was no choir in the Mosaic tabernacle, but one was instituted in the temple by David under the inspiration of the Spirit (1 Chr 28.12-13). Everything about this choir was supernaturally inspired:

- **The composers/singers/musicians:** David, for example, was himself a prophet, composing **the actual words** of many songs (Acts 2.30; 2 Sam 23.1-2).
- **The words of the songs:** As well as singing songs previously given by inspiration, individual choir members were themselves inspired to compose and sing such songs.
 - (Significantly, the word translated "song" in 1 Chronicles 15.22, 27 is commonly translated "burden", i.e. prophecy. In other words, the songs of the temple choir were prophetic.)
- **The music/melody/tunes** of the songs were also imparted prophetically ("prophesy with harps", 1 Chr 25.1).
- David even both designed and introduced **the musical instruments** used by the choir (1 Chr 23.5; 2 Chr 29.5; Neh 12.36; Amos 6.5).

Significant details of the temple choir are found in 1 Chronicles 25. David separated Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman and their sons, to the ministry of song, prophesying on their instruments (1 Chr 25.1-7). As well as all being prophets themselves, of their 24 sons, it is specifically stated that 10 of them also prophesied.

- **Asaph** was a seer (2 Chr 29.30). Psalms 50, 73, & 83, part of God-inspired Scripture, are attributed to him.
 - His sons prophesied (1 Chr 25.2).
 - One of his later descendants was also a prophet, manifesting the same Spirit as his ancestors (2 Chr 20.14).
- **Heman** was a seer (1 Chr 25.5). Psalm 88 is attributed to him.
 - Samuel the prophet was his grandfather (1 Chr 6.33). Now Samuel was the head of a company of prophets which met at his home (1 S 19.18-20). At times this company made music whilst prophesying (1 S 10.5–6). So, the same Spirit which anointed Samuel and those he taught was also in the newly formed temple choir.
- **Jeduthun** was a seer (2 Chr 35.15). Three Psalms, 39, 62 & 77, were for his sons to sing.

How inspiring!

- Just as the earthly tabernacle and temple foreshadowed the already existing heavenly substance and reality (Rev 13.6; 15.5);
- And just as the earthly Shiloah stream (Isa 8.6) flowing from beneath the temple mount shadowed the heavenly river of God flowing from the throne (Rev 22.1), the Holy of Holies on the heavenly mountain of God;
- Even so the worship and music of the earthly temple was to foreshadow the worship of the heavenly temple. It was not only inspired by and initiated by heaven. It was from heaven.

Other OT links between prophecy/prophets and music & song

There are numerous other examples of directly inspired songs composed by prophets or by those under the inspiration of the Spirit. For example:

- **Miriam:** Only one verse says Miriam was a prophetess. It must be significant that the context is the prophetic song of triumph on the shore of the Red Sea (Ex 15.20-21).
- **Deborah:** She was a prophetess (Ju 4.4). The prophetic victory song sung by her and Barak (5.1-31) was composed by her (5.7).
- **Isaiah:** (e.g. Isa 5.1-6; 12.1-6; 26.1-6).
- **Moses:** (e.g. Ex 15.1-19; Dt 31.30-32.43).
- **Hannah:** There is no record that she was a prophetess, but her inspired psalm (1Sam 2.1-10) echoes the words of Mary (Lk 1.46-55).

The OT effects of the song of the Lord

The effects of Spirit-inspired music can be very edifying:

- It drove away an evil spirit from Saul (1 Sam 16.23).
- When a minstrel played for Elisha, the hand of the Lord came upon him bringing the anointing to prophesy (2 K 3.15).
- The music of the temple singers is linked with several incidents of triumphant joy:
 - Military victory and triumphant worship after heeding the prophecy of one of the temple choir (2 Chr 20.19, 21-22, 26-28).
 - Great joy at Hezekiah's feast of unleavened bread (2 Chr 30.21).
 - A great shout of praise at the foundation of the second temple (Ez 3.10-13).
 - As the singers sang aloud, the people rejoiced with a great joy heard afar off at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 12.27-43).

One of the most beautiful examples of the effect of spiritual music is at the inauguration of the Temple of Solomon. It brings down to earth the Presence of the Lord and the Atmosphere of heaven.

*And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the Holy place: (... the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, ... that then **the house was filled with a cloud**, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for **the glory of the LORD had filled the house** of God. (2 Chr 5.11-14)*

This reminds of the heavenly music experienced so often and with such glorious effects in the early days of the early 20th C Pentecostal revival.

How beautiful! Truly, it may be said on that occasion, "Heaven came down and glory filled my soul." How blessed to be so filled with the Spirit that our singing and music bring the Cloud of Glory down to earth from heaven.

Amen. So may it be.