

Order of Worship

Announcements

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Scripture

Lord's Supper

Contribution

Sermon

Closing Prayer



Sunday Morning

Bible Classes 9 a.m.

Worship 10 a.m.

Sunday Evening

Worship 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday Evening

Bible Classes 7 p.m.



New York Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

April 19, 2026

Not a Salvation Issue?

After my Sunday morning sermon on singing in N.T. worship, someone reminded me of the "new" justification being offered for using instrumental music: it's not a salvation issue. First, that's not a "new" justification. I've heard it before over many years. But second, my response is "Really?! That's your argument?"

Let's think about that for a minute. Is it then okay to practice something that God says He doesn't want? And where did you get that idea?

So, when Moses was up on Mt. Sinai and the people came to Aaron saying, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." (Exodus 32:1 (ESV)) Now, it appears that the resulting golden calf was meant to represent God because Exodus 32:4 says, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." (By the way, the word "gods" in verses 1 and 4 is "Elohim" – the name given to God.) Now even though God said they should not make graven images (Exodus 20:4-6), but, you know, they just made something they wanted that represented God. Is that a salvation issue? Well, apparently God thought so because He sent a plague upon the people as punishment for their sin. (Exodus 32:30, 35) Sounds like a salvation issue to me.

How about when David wanted to move the ark of the covenant from Balle-judah to Jerusalem.

Now God had given the responsibility for the ark of the covenant to "the sons of Kohath", a family of the tribe of Levi. (Numbers 3:27-32) In the design of the ark, it was to be carried by these Levites using two long poles (Exodus 37:1-5). Further, the ark was not to be touched. (Numbers 4:15) But when David decided to move the ark, he had it placed on a new cart (2 Samuel 6:3). During transport, the oxen who pulled the cart stumbled and Uzzah reached out to steady the ark. (2 Samuel 6:6) Now, what's the big deal, right? Totally innocent reaction on his part, right? Except, it wasn't what God had commanded. "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God." (2 Samuel 6:7 (ESV)) Wow. Do you think maybe God means what He says? Do you think Uzzah thought steadying the ark was not a salvation issue?

Then there is the case of King Uzziah. Understand, King Uzziah "... did what was right in the eyes of the Lord ..." (2 Chronicles 26:4 (ESV)) That means he followed the Lord pretty closely all his reign. "But when he was strong, he grew proud ..." (2 Chronicles 26:16 (ESV)) He decided he could take it upon himself to enter the temple and burn incense on the altar of incense. Hey, he's just wanting to worship God, right? Even though God said this was the job of the high priest to do that, Uzziah wanted "to change it up" and do it his way. What's the problem? Incense is still being burned, right? Except God struck King Uzziah with leprosy for doing it. (2 Chronicles 26:19). Why? Because King Uzziah was doing what God said only the "sons of Aaron" should do. (2 Chronicles 26:18) Is it starting to sound like God is serious about His commands? If King Uzziah had continued, do you think his practice might have become a salvation issue?

Some may say, "Well, that's the O.T. There are no passages in the N.T. that tell us we can't use musical instruments in worship." That's true, but there are at least five passages that tell us God wants singing – 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15, 16 and James 5:13. And then there is this passage out of Hebrews 2:1-3 – 1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, (ESV) In other words, if God was serious about punishing infractions of His commands in the O.T., now that we have a greater message – the faith revealed in the N.T., do you think God is any less serious about disobedience?

And tell me, if someone continues to practice what he knows is wrong, is that not sin? And if it is the practice of sin, then is that not a salvation issue? ~ Terry



Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
~ **1 Peter 5:8**