

Psalms 33:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

Analysis

Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. David calls for fresh musical expression combined with both technical excellence and joyful volume. This establishes worship should be simultaneously new (creative), skilful (excellent), and exuberant (loud), challenging reductionistic approaches emphasizing one dimension while neglecting others.

Sing unto him a new song (Hebrew *shir chadash*—fresh, newly composed song) introduces theme of creative worship. Not necessarily unprecedented but renewed. New songs can mean recent compositions or renewed vitality in singing familiar truths. Call suggests worship should be fresh, not stale or merely routine. God's mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:23); worship should reflect continual renewal. Creativity honors Creator who makes all things new.

New song theme appears frequently in Psalms (33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1) and culminates in Revelation (5:9, 14:3), where redeemed sing new song before God's throne. These new songs typically celebrate fresh experiences of God's salvation or renewed recognition of His character. Not merely musical novelty but theological freshness—seeing God's unchanging glory with renewed wonder.

Play skilfully (Hebrew *yatab*—make well, do thoroughly, perform with skill) demands technical excellence. God deserves our best artistic offerings, not sloppy or careless work. This challenges both sides of worship wars: against traditionalists performing ancient songs carelessly by rote, and against contemporaries valuing enthusiasm over competence. Skill serves zeal; technique

enables expression. God deserves both heart and craft.

With a loud noise (Hebrew *teruah*—shout, loud sound, joyful noise) combines skill with volume. This is not quiet, contemplative worship but exuberant celebration. Command may initially seem to contradict skilful playing (isn't loud playing crude?), but combination suggests technical excellence should serve passionate expression, not restrain it. Skilled musicians playing loudly create powerful, moving worship. Volume reflects joy, confidence, corporate unity—whole congregation joining in public proclamation of God's glory.

Historical Context

Israel's worship was characteristically loud and joyful. Psalm 150 calls for praise with trumpet, psaltery, harp, timbrel, dance, stringed instruments, organs, loud cymbals. Temple worship included large choirs and orchestras, creating substantial volume. When ark returned, there was shouting and sound of trumpet. When Solomon dedicated temple, musicians' sound was so unified and loud that glory of LORD filled house (2 Chronicles 5:13-14).

Command for new songs ensures worship doesn't fossilize. While honoring tradition and continuity, each generation must sing its own faith, express its own experience of God, cultivate its own artistic contributions. Not abandoning past but building on it—receiving church's hymnic heritage while contributing fresh expressions for contemporary contexts.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to sing new song to God—how maintain freshness and avoid merely routine worship?

2. How can skill and volume both serve God's glory without contradicting each other?
3. Why does God deserve both creative expression (new songs) and technical excellence (skilful playing)?
4. What role should tradition versus contemporary expression play in corporate worship, and how balance these?
5. How does exuberant, loud worship differ from mere noise or entertainment-driven performance?

Interlinear Text

שִׁירוּ	לַ	יְיָ	שִׁיר	חָדָשׁ	יְהִיט יְבוּ	בְתוֹפָה:
Sing	H0	song	unto him a new	skilfully	play	with a loud noise
H7891		H7892	H2319	H3190	H5059	H8643

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 42:10 (Sin): Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

1 Chronicles 25:7 (Parallel theme): So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.

Psalms 96:1 (Sin): O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

Ephesians 5:19 (Sin): Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Revelation 5:9 (Parallel theme): And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Colossians 3:16 (Sin): 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.

Psalms 144:9 (Sin): I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

Psalms 98:1 (Sin): O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

1 Chronicles 13:8 (Sin): And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

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