

Psalms 81:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.

Analysis

Take a psalm (הַקִּימוּ־אֶשֶׁר)—The verb se'û ('lift up, raise') with zimrâh (melody, song) commands the congregation to elevate praise through music. **Bring hither the timbrel** (tôph)—a hand drum used in joyful celebrations (Exodus 15:20, Psalm 150:4), often played by women in processions.

The triad of instruments—**the pleasant harp** (kinnôr, David's instrument) and **the psaltery** (nevel, a larger stringed instrument)—creates full orchestration for temple worship. This verse demonstrates that biblical worship engages the whole person: voice (v. 1), body (percussion), and skillful artistry (strings). God delights in beauty and excellence offered to His glory.

Historical Context

Temple worship under David and Solomon featured professional Levitical musicians (1 Chronicles 15:16-24). The instruments mentioned here—timbrel, harp, and psaltery—formed the core of Israel's liturgical orchestra. Unlike pagan worship that used music for manipulation or ecstasy, Israel's music declared God's character and mighty acts.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does your church's use of music and instruments enhance worship, and what can be improved to bring greater glory to God?
2. Why does God command beauty and artistry in worship rather than merely functional or plain expressions?
3. What role should joy and celebration play in Christian worship, not just reverence and solemnity?

Interlinear Text

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|--------|---------|-----------|--------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| שָׁאוּ | זֶמְרָה | וּתְנוּ | תִּרְ | כֵּן | וְעִים | עִים |
| Take | a psalm | and bring | hither the timbrel | harp | the pleasant | H5973 |
| H5375 | H2172 | H5414 | H8596 | H3658 | H5273 | |

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| נָבֵל: |
| with the psaltery |
| H5035 |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 92:3 (Parallel theme): Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

Mark 14:26 (Parallel theme): And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Exodus 15:20 (Parallel theme): And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.