

Our worship team finished the hymn and, as we regained our breath, we each considered the beauty of the musical harmony. Tom, our leader, then commented on the tension and subsequent relief in the particular song we had just sung. The use of a “passing” tone as a discord that is resolved into a harmonious closing chord is a key to the enchantment of this piece and many others like it.

I realized that there was a spiritual parallel to this musical transition, as we have relief from the tension of our sinful state because of our salvation through Grace. This is a beautiful truth, and can be related through beautiful music. This is a situation that only exists here in this life, so I began to wonder how music actually “works” in heaven.

I had always assumed that when the host of angels appeared to the shepherds when Christ was born, that they were singing their worship. But the scripture does not exactly say that¹. Whether they were singing the message or not, though, it was clear that these heavenly beings were involved in the tension of man’s lost state. They would have had to “translate” the elevated words of the Spirit to the “groaning (Rom 1)” words of fallen mankind. This would be equivalent to transcribing the “musical notes” to a different instrument or key or time signature before we could possibly understand or perform it.

When I read about heaven, I find that there is no danger or fear of loss as there is on earth, but there is tension relative to the activities that are to occur on earth. There are no tears nor is there any pain in heaven, but there is evidently an understanding of pain, which would affect musical performance². But this would all be lost in comparison to the overwhelming beauty of God’s Grace and Love. There is in heaven an infinitely higher logical order of things.

I do know that there is definitely a heavenly form of music, for there are several references to it in the book of Revelation. There is a “new song” that is sung about Christ being worthy because he died for us³. And the song of Moses and the of the Lamb⁴ reflect the greatness of the Lord God and His Truth. But I cannot really conceive of what the music is like, for there is no tension or discord similar to that of man’s situation. And time as we know it was created by God for us and thus He relates to a higher order of sequencing at His level.

My understanding (based on earthly things) cannot extend to “hear” what heavenly music might be like. But I am confident that it is beautiful and inspiring beyond anything, and different from anything, that I can possibly imagine. And I definitely want to be a part of the Great Choir to worship Him with gladness and joyful songs⁵.

1. see Luke 2:13-14; but see the translation “angel choir” by Eugene Petersen in The Message
2. also consider that emotions in heaven include anger, love, and awe (shown as worship)
3. Revelation 5:9
4. Revelation 5:3
5. Psalm 100:2, Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.