

The Harp of David

**Seminar Series by Abbot David Michael,
OF, DD, MS, MEd, DD, ThD**

An Orthodox Franciscan from the Syro-Chaldean and American Orthodox Tradition.

Seminar 1. Learning the Music of King David

By the 9th century, the music of the Psalms as sung in the Temple of Jerusalem was put to writing in the Masoretic text of the old testament of the bible. Until 20 years ago through the work of Haak- Vantura, the actual notes of the Psalms were unknown. Today the original music of the Psalms has been deciphered and can now be played and sang accompanied by the Kinnor harp.

This beginning seminar will provide the musical history background, basic Hebrew styled music theory and the melodic notation for selected pieces of the original music of the Psalms. Students will experience hands-on instruction in playing simple melodies of the Psalms of David on the Kinnor harp. Harps will be

provided to use in this workshop.

Seminar 2. Playing the Kinnor Harp of the Temple

This seminar will provide hands-on instruction on playing the 10 stringed biblical harp called the Kinnor. This intermediate class will teach the melodies for selected Psalms with optional finger picking styles, chords, grace notes and other musical accenting techniques used in playing the Kinnor harp.

Students will be asked to take one piece of music from the Psalms and provide their own arrangement of the music accompaniment in performance to the rest of the class. Students may either sing or narrate the text of the Psalms while playing. Harps will be provided to use in this workshop. Completion of Seminar 1 in this series is requested.

Seminar 3. Developing a Harp Choir

The theory of Hebrew polyphonic music (many melodies played together) will be presented in the development of a harp choir in this seminar. Starting from an analysis of the natural textual beat of the phrases of the Psalms, tempo will be developed into a structured beat then progress using the notes to into chordal movements from which polyphonic melodies can be developed. Simple harmonic theory will be presented.

This adaptation of Makam music theory is a focus on beat metering as well as loud and soft expressions in the music that reflect directly the natural beat and emphasis of certain key words of the Psalms used. It will become important in playing together as a harp choir with students being allowed



to also conduct the class. Harps will be provided to use in this workshop. Completion of Seminar 2 in this series is requested.

Seminar 4.

Composing your Own Psalms on the Harp

The development of the music of ancient Israel departs somewhat from western music. In this advanced seminar of the Makam theory system of music, students will be presented with the theory and practice required to then compose their own original Psalms and music. Students will begin with the writing of poetic prose and then analyze their poetry for natural word emphasis and the rise and fall of emotion conveyed in the text. From there, notes will be chosen based on consonant and dissonant intervals to reflect the emotion of the text and then timing and dynamics added in playing and singing the original Psalms. Sunday morning will provide for the students to play their original Psalms to the rest of the class. Composition cards of short 2-5 note phrases will be provided that provides a shortcut to melody composition. Harps will be provided to use in this workshop. Completion of Seminar 3 in this series is requested.

Seminar 5.

The Dance to the Kinnor Harp.

Dance was a well know expression in the worship of YHWH in the days of the bible. Like with the music, biblical or sacred dance also can carry words of the Psalms and other biblical texts in conveying the full emotion of the ideals being presented. In the adapting of the modern dance style fused with a signing style used in dramatic signing, this seminar will provide to the student dancer the ability to fully express the words of the Psalms in dance with the original music of the Psalms.

Students may choose to play the harp while they dance or may work in groups of two so one dances while the other plays and sings for the dancer. Flutes, drums and other instruments may be added for the dance. Harps will be provided to use in this workshop. Completion of Seminar 2 in this series is requested.

Seminar 6.

Making a Kinnor Harp

The making of the biblical Kinnor harp of 10 strings is now accessible to all people with hand working skills – even those who have never worked with wood. David in this workshop provides a step by step process that enables a student to have a harp finished in 3 days from a kit developed by David for this workshop. The kit and a fully illustrated book of over 100 pages on making and playing the kinnor harp is provided for the class from a \$100 class fee covering the cost of the book which is \$25.00 and the kinnor harp kit which is \$75.00.

The class begins with the presentation of acoustical theory in making instruments then goes into types of suitable woods for harps and then the step by step hands-on process of making the harp. Although the harps can be made solely from just hand tools, the workshop will have available some power tools to make the building and finishing process easier.

Seminar 7.

The Harp of Healing

The use of the harp in battle was common in Israel throughout their history with the fall of the walls of Jericho as being most often remembered. In this seminar class, students will be presented with the biblical instruction in becoming a warrior of YHWH in fighting against evil by bringing peace and love in song and the music of the harp. Healing music will be presented and explored with a scientific base for why music works in bringing peace and healing to the soul and body. Students will be encouraged to discover their 'gifted' and anointed music style in composing healing and battle music to

bring peace to the world around them. It says “YHWH inhabits the praises of his people” and where the light of God exists, no darkness can prevail. Hear also about the death of David and the visions he saw that changed his life. This capstone seminar is what is needed to prepare the people of God for what is coming in the near future. Harps will be provided to use in this workshop. Completion of Seminar 4 in this series is requested.

About Abbot David Michael

Abbot David Michael earned his degree in dance, drama and music from the University of Hawaii with High Honors and holds DoDDS K-12 teacher certification in both music and theater. His graduate degrees include a MEd in Education, a MS degree in Information Systems, a DD in Divinity (honorary) and a ThD in Theology. His apprenticeships includes the prestige as a master cabinet maker, a luthier (instrument maker) as taught by George Gilmore (Student of Segovia) and an apprenticeship under Robert Thomas as a sculptor in metals.

David's music profession has taken him on national tours as a vocalist with the 2nd Chapter of Acts, Jimmy and Carol Owens, Jamie Owens-Collins, Berry McGuire, Pat Boone, Dean Jones and others. His skills at the harp, guitar and flute are accented with a pure tone voice that is often described as angelic while others as an Irish Tenor.



His journey in the Church has taken him through the Baptist Church where he was baptized, the Full Gospel movement where he received the infilling of the Holy Spirit at age 12 and the Episcopal Church where he was confirmed at age 15. David's father, also a minister, was deeply involved in the Jesus People movement of the 60's and 70's and founded many new works where David grew up in “Christian Communes” until the age of 20.

In 1985, David was ordained into the Personal Prelature of Pope John Paul II as a deacon, then a Priest into the Episcopal Church in 1992 and a Bishop into American Orthodoxy in 2000 with lines to the Syro-Chaldean and American Orthodox jurisdictions. He has served as a Wing Chaplain for the CAP/USAF over the State of Hawaii for 8 years and now serves as the Abbot of the Orthodox Franciscans in working with the Greek Orthodox Church and others. His background in music includes the writing of over 50 songs and 2 operas for the stage. David also worked with renown Dr. Arthur Harvey in using music for the healing of the mind and body. He is also a published author with 5 books in print and now offers seminars and retreats as requested.

Notwithstanding, his first love has always been to return to the harp and sing the Psalms of David to his beloved creator, YHWH.

Source Links:

Orthodox Franciscans <http://orthodoxfranciscans.org>

Battle Harp Music <http://battleharp.com>

Glentivar Village Press: <http://glentivar.org>

FOCUS: <http://jesusfocus.org>