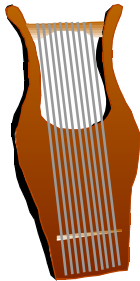


Musical Instruments in the Bible

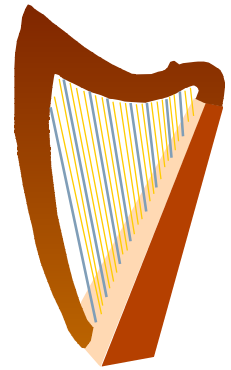
If asked what instrument King David played most people would say the harp. Yet the instrument translated "harp" in the King James Version (kinnor) was not a harp at all, but a lyre. The other stringed instrument David played, translated "psaltery" by the KJV (nevel), was likewise not a psaltery -- and it may not have been a true harp either. According to Josephus (1st century A.D.), the kinnor had ten strings; the nevel, twelve.



kinnor



nevel



modern harp

The most famous wind instruments of the Bible are the trumpet and the horn. The Hebrew Scriptures mention the **hatsotsrot** (trumpets made of silver) and the **shofarot** (horns made of rams' or antelopes' horns).

God commanded Moses (in the **Torah**) to make two silver trumpets or **hatsotsrot** "for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps" (*Lēviticus 10:2*). They were blown singly or together, and with different kinds of calls: **teqi'a** (a simple blowing) and **teru'ah** (a sounding of an alarm).

It was the sound of the Shofar that assembles the sons of Israel at Mt. Sinai and it was the sound of the Shofar, too, that brought down the walls of Jericho. When the Hebrew Scriptures explicitly describe what type of horns the **shofarot** are made from (as in *Joshua 6:4*), they always mention ram's horns.



silver trumpets



Shofar

The only percussion instruments allowed to accompany psalm-singing were the cymbals (cf. *1 Chronicles 25:1*), which were always used in pairs. In the accounts relating to the transport of the Ark of the Covenant, the cymbals are called either **metsiltayim** (*1 Chronicles 15:9*) or **tsiltsilim** (*1 Samuel 6:5*). The former are explicitly said to have been made of bronze.



cymbals