



**To SING Or To PLAY?
The QUESTION of the use
of instruments in worship!**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

SINGING?

Christians have the responsibility to speak to one another **"in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, "singing and making melody" in our hearts to the Lord."** (Ephesians 5:19;).

We are also to **"teach and admonish one another"** with songs. (Colossians 3:16;).

To Play Or Not To Play?

The question of the use of instruments in worship.

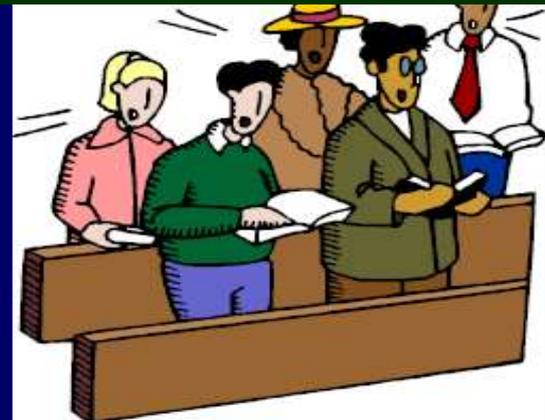


THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

It was a baking hot July Sunday evening in the early 1980's in Liverpool. Into the service came two teenage girls, about 16 or 17 years old. We'd never seen them before. They may have seemed a little flighty but they were not there to create trouble. **They appeared to want to be there.**

I was the speaker that day and the service was to be about angels. Consequently we had a 'normal' opening hymn but then we had two hymns either side of the reading from Luke chapter 2 (about the birth of Jesus,) where angels feature most strongly.

Consequently **the hymns reflected the topic** and were, 'Hark the Herald Angels sing' and 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night.'



THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

The sermon actually had very little to do with Christ's nativity, however, in the middle of the latter hymn, these girls jumped up and all but ran out of the door.

As they went one was heard to say:

“No organ and singing carols in July, it's a madhouse this!”

I understood something then about the expectations of people of the world on the topic of carols and Christmas which is not part of this study and about how we present ourselves to the world.

We often forget that what we take for granted visitors find most strange and will label us as **'peculiar'** at best and **'mad'** at worst. **So why are we different over the practice of the use of instruments (or rather the non-use of instruments) in worship?** Graham Fisher. (Aylesbury.)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

This is an Emotional Topic!

Within our wider communion, there are many views on the playing of instruments in worship.

These range from brethren who allow it, and use them, through those who do not use them but who will sing and are not upset by it if they find themselves worshipping in an instrumental context.

To those who will not have instruments under any circumstances, but who also switch off their radios, or televisions, if they hear a hymn being sung to a musical accompaniment.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

There is no doubt at all that listening to good organ music in a cathedral, or similar large church building, can move the hearer.

It sends tingles down the spine and thrills the soul, even perhaps making you think that you are having a mystical religious experience by being there.

As the hymn-writer puts it:-

**‘Loud organs His glory
Forth tell in deep tone,
And sweet harp the story
Of what He hath done’.
O praise ye the Lord, v. 3**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Our primary reason for believing instrumental music is not to be used in the worship service is Jesus' statement about worship:-

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth." (John 4:24;)

Jesus makes a very telling statement:

"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:63;), and

"Thy [God's] word is truth." (John 17:17;).

These are not conflicting values; they are different ways of expressing the same thing.

("This fruit is red and round." as opposed to "This fruit is red and green.")

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

“We are to be led by the spirit” (Rom 8:4-6, 13-14;)

**In this passage, and in John 6:63; and
all through the New Testament,
the spirit is contrasted with the flesh.**

They are opposites.

Learning this has helped me to see that

"spiritual" does not mean "emotional."

**"Spiritual" means I give up MY OWN DESIRES
and subject them to the
Holy Spirit's teaching and commands.**

**Many, who love the majesty of church organ music,
would reject the logical consequence
of allowing organ accompaniment to singing.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

These consequences can be found in many denominations now, where rock bands rattle the rafters, thrilling the worshippers. Once you open the gate the floodwaters can rush in. **This is one good reason why using instrumental music is unwise.**

We do not find any reference to offering music as worship to the Lord in a Christian context.

Consequently we can feel assured in saying that where a musical item, simply as a musical item, is presented as worship, it is wrong and totally unauthorised.

Thus, if we hear in a worship service that, “Today’s organ solo will be Bach’s”, such an offering is out of order and wrong. We have been positively told to sing.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

**We have not been told to play an instrument
as an act of worship.**

**Is it consequently wrong to accompany a hymn
by playing a musical instrument?**

**What then is being offered to God as worship?
That seems to be the critical question.**

Worship and what is being offered!

**Worshipping God is nothing if it is not an interaction
between the human and the Divine.**

It is not entertainment, nor is it necessarily fun, though there
is nothing at all wrong with it being either. It is where in
humility the inferior recognizes and honours the superior.

**When we worship in song we are
sometimes singing praise of the Divine,
sometimes praying and petitioning Him,
sometimes dedicating ourselves to serving Him, etc.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

We do this via the words we sing, not by the music, nor by the quality of the performance.

The tune is not important; it is merely a vehicle through which we express the words.

Often there are several tunes which all fit the hymn and different congregations will have different preferences.

The quality of the singing is not important either.

It is good that we give our best to God in all that we do but, if we are all frogs and croak the words, or sound like a cats' chorus, we are no less acceptable to Him than if we sound like the BBC Symphony Chorus.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Thus four-part harmony is good if you can do it but we must never sacrifice the sentiments we are singing on the altar of sounding good.

It's what our hearts are singing which is important to God.

Therefore, if an instrument is accompanying the hymn, what is being offered to God?

The music or tune? No!
because that can be variable.

The quality of the singing? No! instruments do not guarantee quality they only guarantee more noise.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

What is being offered are the sentiments expressed in the hymn and these come from the hearts of the worshippers not from the instrument.

If the instrument were to stop playing in the middle of a verse, the words could still be completed without it and God would be worshipped just as truly.

If an organ soloist dries up in the middle, and that was being offered to God, the worship would cease at that point.

From the worshipping-in-song point of view, the accompaniment, or absence of it, is irrelevant.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

It is only there to provide some sort of help with the tune for the worshippers.

So why is it shunned in Christian worship if that's all it is there for?

In fact, Paul tells us that “anyone who is spiritual** has to acknowledge that **the things he wrote are God's commands.**” (1 Corinthians 14:37-38).**

This does not sound like most people's definition of spiritual.

It is also **significant that Jesus told the Samaritan woman that God must be worshipped in spirit **while she was trying to justify her (erroneous) religious practices.****

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

The songs we teach and admonish each other with are to be spiritual songs. (Colossians 3:16;)

There's just nothing spiritual about a mechanical instrument.

It may be **pretty**. It may be **emotional**.

It may produce absolutely **gorgeous music**.

But it isn't spiritual.

It doesn't teach and admonish.

The sound doesn't even get above the roof.

If we decide to include a mechanical instrument as part of our worship, **are we making a spiritual decision?** No way!

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

There are only two motivations for this:-

To be like everyone else (a fleshly decision condemned in 1 Sam 8;), **To please ourselves**, (another fleshly decision condemned in the Bible).

One might say it makes the worship better,
but that is just our opinion.
We are just pleasing ourselves.

We might say we are more uplifted,
but what we really mean is
we get more emotional during the music.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Who is to say what builds up the church besides God? God has told us what he wanted, and it didn't include an instrument. If we do otherwise, we have left the realm of spiritual thinking and gone back to fleshly, worldly things.

THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN.

All of us are prone to fall in with the popular concept that, "Whatever is, is right."

As children born into this scene, we find ourselves surrounded with a church. Already functioning according to accepted patterns of thought and method.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

It is quite natural to us as we develop in our mental and spiritual capacities, to accommodate ourselves to what we find about us, **on the supposition that it is what the Bible teaches.**

Perhaps, as a child, we attended somewhere, where the organ was used at every service. The normality of all this was taken for granted.

Later we might have found the piano, the organ, and even the orchestra, occupied a place of more or less prominence in all the different religious groups we knew.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

Nor did it ever occur to us to question their presence. **We accepted it as having always been a part of church worship and testimony.**

This experience is quite typical among many religious people today.

If we then were invited to attend a little meeting of believers gathered **in simplicity to the name of the Lord Jesus.** **All would seem so different from anything we had ever seen.**

There was no organ, nor musical instrument of any kind, nor was there any sign of a choir.

The singing was congregational, with no visible director.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

All this might seem most peculiar, nor would we feel at all attracted by the strange simplicity of it all.

**Why do people worship like this?
where is the organ? are they nuts!**

Only as we begin to enquire and make a proper study of this situation do we begin to find out that:-

From the beginning of the history of the Church of God on earth, down through the Apostles' time, and on into the early centuries, and thereafter, **instrumental music in any form did NOT play a part in the worship** of the church or gospel testimony.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

The Use of Music in the Early Church.

The Jews had both instrumental music and a cappella (unaccompanied) singing in their worship and each was as acceptable to God as the other.

The Psalms have plenty of references to instrumental music and Psalm 150; is an excellent example.

Thus the church could have adopted either, or both forms, **however church history confirms that it rejected the use of instruments**, and they only appeared after many centuries of a *cappella* singing.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

This could not be simply coincidental for the church was guided in all aspects of its witness by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit obviously wanted it that way.

The two practices were found in separate traditions in Judaism.

The **Temple tradition** was for using instruments but the **synagogue tradition** rejected them.

They still sing a *cappella* in orthodox synagogues today where the songs are led by a cantor.

The church followed the synagogue tradition, **under inspiration, of course**, as we said.

The Temple was the home of the liberal thinkers or Sadducees, and the synagogues were the preserve of the more conservative thinkers or Pharisees.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

**The church was to be guided
by conservative forces not liberal ones.**

**The apostle Paul was a Pharisee.
He had a pharisaical contempt
for instruments in worship.**

**In 1 Cor 13; Paul begins his great treatise on love:-
'If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels,
but have not love, I am only a resounding gong
or a clanging cymbal.'**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

In the next chapter Paul uses instruments in a negative manner:- “Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?”

“Even **in the case of lifeless things** that make sounds such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?” (1 Cor 14:6-8;).

Gongs and cymbals were Temple instruments as were flutes and harps.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,
a liberal publication, has this to say on the topic
(under the section on 'Music.')

**'The superiority of vocal over instrumental music
was a general tenet of Christian aesthetics.'**

Paul's contempt of musical instruments was
based upon the Pharisaic view, the later Christian
authorities had much more reasons for
their antagonism against all instrumental music.

**The pagan theatre and circus,
with their licentious female musicians,
attracted vast masses of Gentile Christians,
who were accustomed to these spectacles.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

The wild vigils of martyrs' anniversaries; the various, only slightly camouflaged, popular festivals, disguised as memorial days of saints, were the occasions when instrumental music was taken for granted.

The church needed three centuries of severe legislation to eradicate at least the worst of these orgiastic customs.

There you have it. The church considered vocal music to be vastly superior to instrumental music, and so it is. **Bad a cappella singing is dire; bad accompanied singing is dire too,** no matter how much drowning out the organ can produce.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Good accompanied singing is marvellous but the climax, the acme of all singing is to be part of good, four part, a cappella singing where the vocal harmonies blend beautifully into a crescendo of spine-tingling euphoria of moving religious proportions.

It leaves you on a mystical 'high' you can never experience when accompanied.

Professional choirs might get a similar experience under concert conditions but we are talking about regular, congregational singing not concert class entertainment.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Far more importantly, the association of instrumental music to licentious behaviour is not peculiar to the first century, or even the first three centuries.

It is just as common today. That the little old lady picking out a hymn tune on a harmonium is not going to lead the worshippers into licentiousness is hardly the point.

From such beginnings have rock bands been introduced with dancing in the aisles and behaviour which could not be described as **'Decent and in order.'** (1 Cor 14:40;) has followed.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

The instruments have taken over and distract from the worship:- A thing which cannot happen with a cappella singing.

Music has its place and purpose in the worship of the congregation. This place and purpose has been created by divine authority.

In that place and purpose we must remember and recognise the importance of:-

- 1) The kind of music authorised.**
- 2) The purpose music serves.**
- 3) The manner in which it is rendered.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Let us remind ourselves, that the proper
"Christian" or Church dispensation
did not begin until the day of Pentecost.

When our Saviour was on earth He told Peter
in Matt. 16:18;

"Upon this rock **I WILL build My church**":
NOT, "**I am building** My church,"
NOT, "**I have built** My church," BUT
"**I will build**":- it was still in the future.

The actuality of the Church as a present functioning body
upon earth takes its beginning from the day of Pentecost
as described in Acts 2; This is definitely substantiated
by the word in 1 Corinthians 12:13;
"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

The first time the word "**church**" (properly "**assembly**," from the Greek word "**ekklesia**") is used in Acts to designate this new body, is in chapter 5:11. "And great fear came upon all the church."

So we are quite sure of our ground if we conclude that we must confine our investigation of **apostolic practice** in the Church, to those portions of the New Testament which come after the four Gospels.

The first thing that strikes us as we examine the book of the Acts is the silence as to anything resembling present day use of musical instruments in the Church.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

In fact, the only mention of singing in the whole of the Acts is on the occasion of the imprisonment of Paul and Silas at Philippi.

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." Acts 16: 25;

We feel confident no one would think of musical instruments in that dark and inner dungeon.

When we go on to the epistles we find the same utter silence as to the use of any mechanical helps to Christian worship or testimony.

Let us here list every occurrence in the New Testament epistles which make mention of music or singing

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

If God intended musical instruments to have a place in the congregation, would He not have made known to us somewhere, either in the twenty-eight chapters of the Acts, or within the body of the fourteen letters of Paul, the three of John, the two of Peter, or those of James and of Jude, To give his sanction to instruments in worship?

How striking is the fact that that which now bulks so large in the thought and practice of present day Christianity, **should have NO mention** in these twenty-two communications, written by six different servants of the Lord, and covering a period of approximately seventy years.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

What about the last book in the New Testament?

We should not be surprised that we find frequent mention of singing in this book of heavenly triumph after the sufferings and trials of earth's pilgrimage.

Nor is it the song of angels that greets our ear in this apocalyptic book. It is worthy of note that there is **no Biblical record of angels' singing.**

They are not redeemed as we are.

*"Clad in this robe, how bright I shine!
Angels possess not such a dress;
Angels have not a robe like mine
Jesus the Lord's my righteousness.*

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

*'Though angels praise the heavenly King,
And Him their Lord adoring own,
We can with exultation sing,
He wears our nature on the throne.'*

In the second place, we must keep in mind in reading Revelation that it is a book full of symbols.

Dr. A. H. Burton in his pamphlet, "The Symbols of the Apocalypse Briefly Defined" lists no less than two hundred different symbols in this book of the Revelation.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Logically then, **one must not put too much emphasis on the literality of what we meet in this most remarkable unveiling of the future.** For instance, though we readily acknowledge the fact that the twenty-four elders symbolize the glorified saints, we would never for a moment take the number twenty-four literally.

Actually, we believe their number will be beyond our computation. If we have no difficulty in seeing the *symbolical* significance of the number twenty-four, why should we hesitate to regard the harps as wholly symbolical?

Dr. Burton in his book above referred to, lists the "harps" as "symbolic of the choral service of praise. (Psalm 98:5;)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Furthermore, if we want to press for a literal meaning in the heavenly harps, then we must also accept the accompanying figures in their literality.

If we must add harps (instruments of music) to our assembly worship and testimony because we find harps in heaven, then let us be consistent and add also the golden bowls and the incense, the golden altar, and the crowns upon the head!
See Also Rev. 5:8-9; 14:2-3; 15:2-3;

To sum up so far, we can say with the assurance of **the revealed will of God** as found in New Testament doctrine and practice, **that instrumental music had no place in the apostolic Church.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP. SHOULD mechanical instruments of MUSIC IN WORSHIP BE A MATTER OF OPINION.

Many in the religious world have for years contended that they (instruments) were aids or expediencies and that one could worship God acceptably with or without their use.

Does it matter if what we do in worship or any other practice is without scriptural sanction or authority.

Christians claim to believe in the authority of the Scriptures and so in this modern age if we want to abandon that now, surely we would need to have sufficient reason for doing so.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

May the Lord continue to give us the courage,
wisdom, and love of the truth to continue
contending for the faith
once delivered to the saints. (Jude 3;)

We need unity in the religious world and in the
church of the Lord, but **it must be based on truth.**
(2 John 9-11;)

Not on the principle of compromise.
Let us:- "**prove all things and hold fast
to that which is good.**" (I Thess 5:21;).

What do we sing?

Psalm 68:3-4; “But let the godly rejoice. Let them be glad in God's presence. Let them be filled with joy.

Sing praises to God and to His name!

Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds.

His name is the Lord-rejoice in his presence!”

What do we sing?

I Chronicles 16:8-12;

“Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.”

Glory in His holy name:-

let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

**Seek the LORD and his strength,
seek His face continually.**

**Remember his marvellous works that he hath done,
his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;**

What do we sing

Sing unto God,

Sing **PRAISES** to the Lord!

RAISE your voice in song to him who rides upon the clouds! Yahweh is his name--oh, **REJOICE** in his presence. !

I. Praise



2. Worship



3. Rejoice



to His name! to Him who rides the clouds. in His presence!

Classic Scripture Verses for Music

Colossians 3:16

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.**

2 Chron 29:25;

“And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with **cymbals**, with **psalteries**, and with **harps**, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.”

Ephesians 5:19-20

Speaking to **yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing and making **melody in your heart to the Lord**; **Giving thanks always** for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Daniel 3:5

That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and **all kinds of musick**, ye **fall down and worship the golden image** that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

Amos 6:5

That **chant to the sound of the viol**, and **invent to themselves instruments of music**, like David;

Sing in Praise.

“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.” Col 3:16;

This verse is rich with application.

The most important point to be made here, and one that is highly skipped over by most, is the obvious statement that we are to **Let the word of Christ dwell** be the emphasis.

It is not the psalms, hymns or spiritual songs that teach and admonish - **it is the word of Christ that teach through these** the singing is a “means,” **“not the power”** in teaching and admonishing.

Sing in Praise.

A second application to this verse is found in the part ...psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...
There seems to be a direction away from Psalms,
Away from hymns even
many today just want the spiritual songs.

People today seems bored with **Psalms** and **Hymns**
and so spiritual songs becomes all they want to
sing. They slap them up on their overhead screen
and clap and sway **with some of the most fluffy**
worthless spiritual and praise songs.

Sing in Praise.

Another application refers to the singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

We all need to have grace regarding our singing.

We are to make a joyful noise to the Lord

Psalms 66:1; 81:1; 95:1,2; 98:4,6 & 100:1;

But we certainly can't claim loud for loud sake or because of speakers and amplifiers, nor can we consider 'polluting praises' as singing with grace.

When a congregation sings 'with grace', the rafters will shake, and it will not be because of the rhythm section of the band or keyboard nor will it be the foot stompin' teen section in the back of the church!

Sing in Praise.

It will be because there are true praises being sung unto God to His name, before Him.

Psalm 68:4; Shows us three ways for us to sing unto God:-
Praise. Extol. Rejoice.

I Chronicles 16:7-12; “Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. **Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon His name, (worship) make known His deeds among the people.**”

Sing unto him, **sing** psalms unto him, **talk** of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them **rejoice** that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

SOME ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT INSTRUMENTS.

Some say that mechanical instruments of music in worship to God is simply a matter of opinion, and the opposition to such is an expression of legalism, **those who reject the instrument in worship are just being stubborn.**

One argument advanced in favour of mechanical instruments in worship is the idea that God commanded them in the O.T.

“And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.” (2 Chron 29:25;)

SOME ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT INSTRUMENTS.

Where does **Ephes 5:19**; fit in to this picture? “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”

Psalms are songs of praise.

Hymns are worship songs.

Spiritual songs are rejoicings.

Remember!

Praises are: AT others, FROM me, TO him.

Extolling is: TO Him, FROM me!

Rejoicing is: FROM me, FROM Him!

The word **EXTOL** is not a common word today, but obviously it is the word God wants us to know and use. **Extol means** to raise in words or eulogy; to praise; to exalt in commendation; to magnify.

Sing Praises to His Name

From Me.

At Others.

To Him.

**“Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon His name,
MAKE KNOWN HIS DEEDS among the people.**

**Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him,
TALK OF ALL HIS WONDROUS WORKS.”**

I Chron 16:8-12;

***“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and
hymns and spiritual songs, singing and
making melody in your heart to the Lord.”***

Ephesians 5:19;

Psalms are meant to be sung.

What do we sing

Psalm 7:17	Psalm 92:1	Psalm 145:7	Jerem 20:13
Psalm 9:2	Psalm 95:1,2	Psalm 149:1	Jeremiah 31:7
Psalm 40:3	Psalm 96:1	Prov 25:20	I Chron 15:27
Psalm 18:49	Psalm 101:1	Isaiah 5:1	Ephes 5:19
Psalm 57:9	Psalm 108:1	Isaiah 24:14	Exod 15:1-21
Psalm 61:8	Psalm 108:3	Isaiah 35:6	Colos 3:16-17
Psalm 66:4	Psalm 126:2	Isa 42:10-12	Acts 16:25
Psalm 68:32	Psalm 135:3	Isaiah 48:20	Deut 31:19-30
Psalm 69:30	Psalm 137:3,4	Isaiah 52:8,9,6	I Chron 9:33
Psalm 75:9	Psalm 138:1	Isaiah 65:14	I Chron 23:5

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

The use of instruments under the Old Law was confined to the male priests and Levites. "the privilege of belonging to which was based upon natural descent.... They formed a separate and exclusive order, to which none were admitted but those descended from a particular family."
(Schurer, 1890, 1:225,271; cf. 1:226,269-273,290).

The priests then withdrew from the Holy Place.

"All the priests who were there had consecrated themselves, regardless of their divisions. All the Levites who were musicians, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets."
(2 Chronicles 5:11-12;)

David's instruments

Amos 6:5; “Woe to those at ease in Zion who invent to themselves instruments of music, like David did; Or You sing foolish songs to the music of harps, and you make up new tunes, just as David used to do; Or croon to the sound of the lute; who like David invent for themselves instruments of song.”

I Chronicles 23:5; says “that four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith.”

David's music and his instruments were for God's praises.

The rank and file Jewish worshippers, including all the women, did not play instruments and would have been disobedient if they had presumed to do so.

(cf. Numbers 16:8-10,40;)

SOME ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT INSTRUMENTS.

The instruments listed in Psalm 33 and 150 were not optional they were commanded. There are over 20 kinds of musical instruments mentioned in the Old Testament with which you can praise God?

So to obey the command of God, they must use the harp, the psaltery, the instrument of 10 strings, the trumpet, timbrel, organ, cymbals, etc.;

There are over 500 Direct References to Singing!

Music Starts a Fire

Most people are not even aware of the role that music played in the well known story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? In fact, music played such an important role, that verse 5 is repeated in verse 7, 10.

When the action gets thicker, the same command is repeated one more time in the verse. **Daniel 3:5-7;**

“That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoever falls not down and worships shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

Music Starts a Fire

“Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.”

So as one becomes more and more aware of the power of music, we must realize that the issue is far more than 'good' or 'bad' music.

**All kinds of music can make anyone bow down to the golden image - even today.
The Holy Spirit works through words, not music!**

Some Musical Events in the Scriptures.

Moses song of Deliverance! Exodus 15;	339,000 musicians! I Chronicles 12:13;
All that should make a sound! I Chronicles 16:42;	Priests sound trumpets to all! 2 Chronicles 7:5-6;
Musicians help the workmen! I Chronicles 25;	4000 Instrumentalists! I Chronicles 23:5;
Music at a burnt offering! 2 Chronicles 29:24-28;	Sing with LOUD instruments! 2 Chronicles 30:21;
128 Singers! Ezra 2:41;	200 Singing men and women! Ezra 2:65;
148 Singers! Nehemiah 7:44;	245 Singers! Nehemiah 7:67;
A new song unto the LORD! Ps 33:2,3; 43:4; 68:25; 92:3; 98:5; 144:9; 150:3-5;	Singing “Thou Art Worthy!” Revelation 5:8-9;
Song of Moses and the song of the Lamb! Revelation 15:2-3;	Harpers harping before the throne! Revelation 14:2-3;

Musical Instruments Used to Praise, Worship and Rejoice Before God!

153+ specific verses concerning: harp, organ, ram's horn, tabrets, psalteries, cymbals, trumpets, cornets, neginoths, flutes, sackbuts, dulcimers, viols, pipes & horns.

There are verses that mention instrumental music as *holy instruments of music, loud instruments, played by skilled players on stringed instruments.*

There is even a reference that could be applied to today's music as **being written and invented for our own selfish use, not for praising God!**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Though New Testament writers alluded to many of the Old Testament psalms, none include any of the references to instruments.

If the use of instrumental music in the Psalms was intended to serve as a precedent for Christians, you would think at least one reference to instrumental music from the Psalms would be mentioned in the New Testament;

As Methodist commentator Adam Clarke noted in his remarks on Psalm 81:-

"He must be ill off for proofs in favour of instrumental music in the Church of Christ, who has recourse to practices under the Jewish ritual." (n.d., 3:477).

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

To prove that instruments of music were commanded in the Old Testament **proves nothing** in connection with them being permitted in New Testament worship.

Does the fact that God commanded **the offering of animal sacrifice in the Old Testament** make it an option in the New Testament?

“The law of Moses was abolished or removed by the cross. God wiped away the written code with its strict orders. It was negative; it was against us. He took it out of the way. *He nailed it to the cross.*”

(Col. 2:14;)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

“By his death he ended the whole system of Jewish law that excluded the Gentiles. His purpose was to make peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new person from the two groups.” (Eph 2:15;)

For us to revert to the Old Testament **to gain authority** for a practice in the New Testament is to handle stolen goods, by this is simply meant that **one is taking that which he has no right.**

Further, **if** one is going to take the position that the instrument can be used in worship of God today **because** it was commanded in the Old Testament, then it appears that **one would be forced into the position that all things that were commanded in the Old Testament, are things which may be used in worship of God today.**

See also 2 Cor 3:1-14; Gal 3:24-25; Rom 7:4;

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Some say that God has never objected to mechanical instruments of music, thus there is no law forbidding them, and where there is no law, there is no transgression.

The basic premise of this argument is, all things not specifically condemned by God are things which are permitted.

Just a little thoughtfulness along this line will show the weakness of the position. To my knowledge God has never specifically condemned burnt offerings, burning of incense, having coke and cake on the Lord's table, counting of beads in worship, etc.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

Are these things therefore permitted?

Are they a matter of opinion?

The fact of the matter is, the Bible does not have to specifically forbid something for it to be condemned.

All God has to do is specify what He wants done.

If all we do is to be by the authority of Christ.

(Col. 3:17;) Instruments of music are not authorized, they are therefore forbidden.

“If any man who is a preacher believes that the apostle teaches the use of instrumental music in the church by enjoining the singing of psalms, he is one of those smatterers in Greek who can believe anything that he wishes to believe. When the wish is father of the thought, correct exegesis is like water on a duck's back.”

J.W. McGarvey written in the Christian Standard.

on November 30, 1895: (1910, p. 116).

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

This is the same basis that prohibits infant baptism and sprinkling. They are not authorized! God has nowhere specifically forbidden sprinkling or infant baptism, but He has specified who are to be baptized. (Mark 16:16;) and how they are to be baptized. (Rom 6:4;)

Some say that mechanical instruments used in worship to God are just like using song books, pitch pipes, and tuning forks.

The reasoning is that the song books, pitch pipes, and tuning forks are **aids to our singing** and are optional (may be used, but don't have to be) and so contend that mechanical instruments are also an aid and are optional relative to their use.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

The pitch pipes and tuning forks have only one function and that is to get the pitch which aids the singing. The song books simply give the lyrics and notes of a song thus serve as an aid, but the mechanical instrument is music in addition to singing.

Someone wrote these words speaking of the great value of the congregation worshipping God in an uplifting song service:- “It is almost impossible to overestimate the value of a good congregational song service. It stimulates and animates the church to its highest degree of spiritual devotion and worship.”

“It gives an opportunity to every member of the congregation to express the praise and thanksgiving of his/her heart and prepares it for the reception of God’s eternal truth. It enriches, broadens, and sweetens life.”

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

“It strengthens the faint and discouraged soul with a new faith and a new hope. It pours the oil of gladness into wounded and sorrowing hearts and revives the drooping spirit to life.”

“It turns the thoughts of weary pilgrims from the conflicts and crosses of this life to the eternal existence where no shadows ever fall, to the home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Remember there are different kinds of worship, some acceptable to God and some that are not.

First, God rejects and does not accept

“ignorant” worship. (Acts 17:23, 30;)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP.

God does not receive worship that is issuing from the heart of the **“will-worshipper,”** who is **only doing what pleases himself** instead of the Creator.

(Col 2:20-23;)

Neither is God happy with worship that is based on **“the traditions of men”** and **“the creeds of men.”**

This kind of worship is styled in the scriptures as **“hypocrisy”** and **“vain worship”** empty and worthless. (Matthew 15:7-9;)

How Close Can We Be To God in Order To Worship Him?

UNTO GOD

UNTO THE LORD

UNTO THEE

UNTO HIM

UNTO OUR KING

BEFORE HIM

BEFORE THE LORD

BEFORE HIS PRESENCE

BEFORE THE THRONE

TO HIS NAME

“But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are **made near by the blood of Christ.**”

Ephesians 2:13;

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, **I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**”

Revelation 3:20;

Thoughts on Worship!

“We know very little about worship today. While we brag about our emphasis on preaching, we miss worship by a mile. Church services are becoming oriented around entertainment rather than worship.”

- Linton Smith

“The God of the modern evangelical rarely astonishes anybody. He (God) manages to stay pretty much within the constitution very well-behaved, very denominational and very much one of us.” A. W. Tozer - 1961

“We are here to be worshippers first and workers only second. Out of enraptured, admiring, adoring souls God does His work. The work done by a worshipper will have eternity in it.” A.W. Tozer

Thoughts on Worship!

“The church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshipping men.

A whole new philosophy of the Christian life has resulted from this one basic error.” Tozer

True worship can only take place when we agree to God sitting not only on His throne in the centre of the universe, but on the throne that stands in the centre of our heart.

God is not moved or impressed with our worship until **our hearts are moved and impressed by Him!**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

In one of the great scriptures commanding singing in worship to God, Paul taught that singing is an individual as well as a collective act:-

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19;)

**The command to “speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”
is a reciprocal action of each worshipper.**

Singing in worship to God is unique in that every worshipper in the same manner and the same time can pour out their heart in praise to the Almighty.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Whether we are excellent or average or poor as a singer, in the sight of God what counts is that it comes from the heart:-

Acceptable worship must be spiritual, issuing from the spirit of the worshipper and in truth, as God directs in His word.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Let us examine more closely the use of the word **PSALLO**.

Romans 15:9; "As it is written, For this cause I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and **sing** unto Your name."
(This is a direct quotation from the LXX of Psalm 18:49;)

1 Corinthians 14:15;
"I will **sing** with the spirit, and
I will sing with the understanding also."

Hebrews 2:12; "In the midst of the church
will I **sing** praise unto Thee."
(This is a direct quotation from the LXX of Psalm 22:22;)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Colossians 3:16; "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

James 5:13; "Is any merry? let him **sing** psalms."

Ephesians. 5:19; "Speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and **making melody** in your heart to the Lord."

We could also add just for examples sake Jesus and the disciples in Matthew 26:30; After the psalms had been **sung** they left for the Mount of Olives.

Note, that nothing in any one of these **seven references** carries with it the slightest suggestion of musical accompaniment. The **"melody"** mentioned is **distinctly stated** to be that **"in your heart,"**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Paul expresses to the Corinthian congregation:-

“So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will **sing** with my spirit, but I will also **sing** with my mind.

“If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say **"Amen"** to your thanksgiving, **since he does not know what you are saying.**” 1Cor 14:15-16;

Perhaps the strongest effort of those who seek to uphold the instrument revolves around the word **"psallo."**

The claim is that the use of this word inherently involves the use of mechanical instruments.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

It is interesting in consideration of this point that if the word "**psallo**" inherently involves playing mechanical instruments, then they cease to be an opinion and **become mandatory**. If they are mandatory then we are in violation of Scripture if they are not used, and to violate God's law is to constitute sin (I John 3:4;)

It is also worthy of note, that if mechanical instruments of music are inherent in "**psallo**," that the apostles and first century church also sinned in view of the fact that history shows that **they did not use instruments in their services**.

We need to consider that while **the word does mean to pluck or twang**, the particular **instrument** is not inherent in the word. in other words **the context determines what is plucked or twanged**.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Let us look closer at the verb **YALLV / PSALLO** in the New Testament. It is translated in every case by the English verb “**sing,**” except in **Ephes 5:19;** where it is translated by the participle “**making melody.**”

17 “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and making **melody** in your heart to the Lord,

20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Eph 5:17-21;

NKJV

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

First, we notice that the **wise can understand what the will of the Lord is**:- “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:17;) **The will of God, not the will of man.** Man **can understand God’s will** that He has **given to us in the word.**

Second, it is God’s will that **we not be filled, dissipated and drunk** with wine and strong drink:
“8. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life.” (Ephesians 5:18;)

Third, the main verb in the next sentence is **“be filled.”** Instead of being filled with wine, the child of God is commanded to **“be filled with the Spirit.”**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

The word of God is filled with the Spirit of God. Jesus said that “the words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.” (John 6:63; NIV.)

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.

Ephes 5:19; has a parallel passage in Colossians:-

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you **sing** psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” (Col 3:16; NIV.)*

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Let us look at the five **participle actions** resulting when the child of God is filled with the Spirit.

1. Speaking:- Paul commands, “Be filled with the Spirit, **speaking to one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” (Eph 5:18;)

“Speaking” from: **laloúntes**, pres. act. part. nom. plur. masc. fr. **laleo** “to use words in order to **declare one’s mind** and disclose one’s thoughts; **to speak**: to speak to, i.e. converse with one: **heautois** (dat. of pers.) **psalmois kai humnois** (dat. of instrument). Eph. 5:19.” Thayer, pp. 368-369.

When we sing we are speaking words to declare the thoughts of our mind or heart. An instrument of music can do a lot of things and someone said the violin is the nearest thing to duplicating the human voice, **but it cannot speak words to communicate praise to God.** Actually **this speaking** is another **synonym for singing.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

This **speaking** is a reciprocal action used with the dative of person “**speaking to one another,**” or “**to yourselves.**”

“To yourselves,” (**heautois, dat. plur. masc. 2nd pers. plur. fr.**

heautou). “Reflexive pronoun of the 3rd pers. It is used 3.

It is used frequently in the plural for the reciprocal pronoun **allalon, allalois, allalous, reciprocally, mutually, one another:**

Col 3:13, 16 etc.” Thayer, p. 163

In psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”

We have here **three species of singing.**

There is only a **slight difference** as we shall notice between “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”

“**Psalms,**” (**pneumatikais, dat. plur. masc. fr. psalmos**),

“a striking, twanging; (Eur., al.); spec. a striking the cords of a musical instrument (Pind., Aeschyl., al.); hence a pious

song, **a psalm, Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16;** the phrase **echein psalmon** is used of one who has it in his heart to sing or

recite a song of the sort. 1 Cor. 14:26.” —Thayer, p. 675

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“Spiritual,” (pneumatikais, dat. plur. fem. fr. Pneumatikos).
“in the N. T. 3. **belonging to the Divine Spirit;** a. in reference to things; emanating from the Divine Spirit, or exhibiting its effects and so its character: oodai, **divinely inspired,** and so redolent of the Holy Spirit. Col 3:16; Eph 5:19.” Thayer, 523.

“Songs,” (oodais, dat. plur. fem. fr. Oodai), “a song, lay, ode; **in the Scriptures a song in praise of God or Christ:** Rev. 5:9; 14:3; Mouseos k. tou arniou, the song which Moses and Christ taught them to sing, Rev. 15:3; plur. with the epithet pneumatikai. Eph 5:19; Col 3:16.” Thayer, p. 679

Therefore, this **“speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”**
is definitive of the next participle, - **singing.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“**Singing**” is the second participle related to the leading verb

“**be filled.**” Let us define the participle “**singing:**”

“**Singing,**” (adontes, pres. part. nom. plur. masc. fr. ado), “**to sing, chant;** 1.intrans.: tini, to the praise of anyone (Judith 16:1-2), Eph 5:19; Col 3:16, (in both passages of the lyrical emotion of a devout and grateful soul).” Thayer, p. 13.

“but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and **making melody** in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:18-19;)

As stated previously, “**making melody**” from [psallo--yallv], is **translated in every instance by “sing”** except in the present case.”

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Many of the on-line definitions of psallo are too brief and do not adequately and accurately give the etymology and true meaning of the word as it was used in New Testament times.

“Making melody,” (psallontes, pres. part. nom. plur. masc. fr. psallo). “(fr. psao, to rub, wipe; to handle, touch); a. to pluck off, pull out: etheiran, the hair, Aeschyl. Pers. 1062. b. to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang: toxon neuras cheiri, Eur. Bacch. 784; spec. chordan, to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate.” (Aristot.)

“to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp, etc.: Aristot., Plut., Arat.; to sing to the music of the harp; in the N. T. to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song. Jas. 5:13; [R. V. sing praise] to kurio, to onomati autou, (often so in Sept.), in honour of God.” Eph. 5:19; Rom.15:9

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“psalo to pneumati, psalo de kai to noi, ‘I will sing God’s praises indeed with my whole soul stirred and borne away by the Holy Spirit, but I will also follow reason as my guide, so that what I sing may be understood alike by myself and by the listeners.’”

1 Cor. 14:15.” Thayer, p. 675

Notice that **the root meaning of psallo** is to rub, wipe, handle and touch. Therefore, down through the ages of development **psallo had several definitions**, with the root meaning always present. Let us **notice these changing** uses of the word that is translated **“sing”** in the New Testament usage.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

1. In the days of Aeschylus psallo was used with the idea of pulling or plucking the hair.

2. And in this same sense, psallo was used to express the action of the archer in twanging or plucking the bowstring.

3. Next, in the developing connotation of psallo, we find that in the days of Euripides, the verb means to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang; to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate.

And in the days of Aristotle and Plutarch psallo absolutely means to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp, etc.; and to sing to the music of the harp.

Notice again the root meaning of rub and touch is involved in the evolving meaning of this verb.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

4. But many advocates of instrumental music fail to mention that by the times of the New Testament, the verb psallo had come to mean exclusively to sing or chant.

Notice the last definition given by J. H. Thayer:

“in the N. T. to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song, Jas. 5:13; [R. V. sing praise] to kurio, to onomati autou, (often so in Sept.), in honour of God, Eph. 5:19; Rom.15:9; psalo to pneumati, psalo de kai to noi, ‘I will sing God’s praises indeed with my whole soul stirred and borne away by the Holy Spirit, but I will also follow reason as my guide, so that what I sing may be understood alike by myself and by the listeners.’ 1 Cor. 14:15.” Thayer, p. 675

Even in the instance of the word meaning to “sing,” the root idea of psallo is still present, because when a person sings, the vocal cords vibrate to produce the melodious sounds.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

And in Ephesians 5:19; in the only instance where **psallo** is translated “**making melody,**” it conveys the idea of **figuratively chanting in the human heart.** (inner man.)

“**In your heart,**” (*tee kardia humoon*, dat. sing. fem. fr. *kardia*), “*the heart*; 2. univ. *kardia* denotes **the seat and centre of all physical and spiritual life**; and b. the centre and seat of spiritual life, *the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors* (so in Eng. heart, inner man, etc.);”
a. univ. Eph. 5:19; Thayer, p. 325.

Therefore, there is no case that can be made for instrumental music in worship to God, based on the verb psallo. The worship music of the New Testament church was and is singing.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

20 “**giving thanks** always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Ephesians 5:18-20;)

In our worship let us always be thankful to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“**submitting** to one another in the fear of God.” (Eph 5:21;)

Submitting is difficult for many people today — especially when we live in a free society.

Yet this same word is used to instruct us to:-

“Submit to the governing power.” (Romans 13:1, 5;)

Children are to submit to their parents as did Jesus. (Luke 2:51;) “Wives are to submit to their husbands.” (Colossians

3:18;) and **All are “to submit to God.”** (James 4:7;)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

So **Psallo** may refer to **plucking** the beard, the bow string, the carpenters line, the harp, etc., **but it is perfectly clear from the text that the instrument to be plucked or twanged is the heart.**

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and **making melody in your heart** to the Lord. Eph 5:19;

Remember that **proving** that the word **can mean** to pluck the strings of an instrument does **not prove such is the case in Ephesians and Colossians** or any other N. T. passage.

The **context** must be the determining factor. In the Ephesian and Colossian letters, **the heart is shown to be the instrument under consideration.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Some say the only basis of fellowship is rooted simply in what one believes regarding the person of Christ.

Unless the falsehood being taught is about the person of Christ? nothing else matters? It does not matter what else you believe or do we are all one in Christ.

If that were the case the why should we be concerned about false teachers. (Matt 7:15; 2 Pet 2:1; Acts 20:30; 1 Cor 1:1-10; etc)

In the N.T. SINGING IS AUTHORISED BY GOD.

Singing is clearly authorized in worship to God! It is the only type of music in worship to God that is authorized.

Some Passages that refer to singing are:-

“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.” (Matt. 26:30;).

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.” (Acts 16:25;).

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and **sing** unto thy name.” (Rom. 15:9;)

“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will **sing** with the spirit, and I will **sing** with the understanding also.” (I Cor 14:15;)

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and **making melody** in your heart to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:19;)

“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.” (Col. 3:16;)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.
Is any merry? let him **sing** psalms.” (James 5:13;)

“Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren,
in the midst of the church will I **sing** praise unto
thee”
(Heb 2:12;)

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise
to God continually, that is, **the fruit of our lips** giving
thanks to His name.”
(Heb 13:15;).

**These passages clearly show the authorization
to sing.** It should also be pointed out that,
not only are we authorized to sing,
we are commanded to sing.
Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

We need to study carefully and remember frequently, lessons from the past regarding a disrespect for the authority of the word of God. We need to strive for **UNITY** not **DIVISION** in our teaching and practice.

“And whatsoever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (Col. 3:17;)

Consider a few additional passages about unity:

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; **Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:1-3;)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them.” (Rom 16:17; 2 John 9-11;)

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (I Cor 1:10;).

**“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, (mature) be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”
(2 Cor 13:11;).**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Unity is indeed good and pleasant and we should and must endeavour to have it, but it must not be a unity based on compromise but upon truth.

The truth should not be for sale. The truth is not on the auction block to be sold to the highest bidder or done away with, but remains firmly rooted in the Rock of Ages. God originated it. Christ lived it, the Holy Spirit revealed it, and we must be faithful to it and preach it in its purity and simplicity.

The issue of mechanical instruments of music in worship has been a long standing point of controversy. Yet as we have seen so far by the Holy Spirits choice it was NEVER used in the congregations of Gods people of the 1st century.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

I feel sure that many who read this far will be much surprised to learn that several centuries of church history elapsed before the introduction of musical instruments.

Those who have tried to find authority for why they use the instruments in the Church have been hard put to find ANY mention of such an innovation during the first six centuries of church history.

An elaborate attempt has been made to enlist **Clement of Alexandria** as the first witness in favour of instrumental music in the Church. Clement was a Greek theologian who taught in Alexandria and was prominent in church affairs from cir. 192AD up till his death. cir. 215 A.D.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Joseph Bingham, the eminent author of '**Antiquities of the Christian Church**,' unhesitatingly says:

“Clement rather argues that instrumental music, the lute and the harp, of which he speaks, was not in use in the public churches.” (Antiq. Vol. 2, p. 485.)

"But this is not all ... Some eminent scholars are pronounced in the conviction that the passage now under review is, beyond all doubt, **an interpolation."**
(that means added by someone else!)

Johann Caspor Suicer, a noted Latin writer of the seventeenth century makes certain quotations from **Clement** among which is the following:

'Superfluous music is to be rejected because it breaks and variously affects the mind.'

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Suicer draws this pointed conclusion:-

'Nothing therefore has Clement written which would favour organs and their present-day use even the least, yea, directly the contrary'

“It is simply impossible to interpret Clement in support of instrumental music in Christian worship without involving him in unaccountable self-contradiction.”

Kurfees, "Instrumental Music, etc. "pp. 125-134:

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Next in order of supposed witnesses summoned in favour of instrumental music in the church, is **Ambrose**, Bishop of Milan. 340-397AD.

Mr. Kurfees, who has made such an exhaustive study of the matter states:

"We only make the point here that the evidence thus far adduced in support of the claim is not only not conclusive, but points decidedly to the conclusion that **Ambrose** at any rate, never introduced it."

In fact, the McClintock and Strong's Cyclopaedia says:
"Neither Ambrose, nor Basil, nor Chrysostom in the noble ecomiums which they severally pronounced upon music, made any mention of instrumental music."

Vol. 6, p. 759, Art. Music. (Kurfees, p123-124).

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Mr. Kurfees next quotes from several authorities on music and church customs. **He first cites Dr. Ritter**, Director of the School of Music at Vassar College, in his "History of Music", p.144:

"We have no real knowledge of the exact character of the music which formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregation."

"It was, however, purely vocal. Instrumental music was excluded at first, as having been used by the Romans at their depraved festivities; and everything reminding them of heathen worship could not be endured by the new religionists."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Edward Dickinson, Professor of the History of Music, in the Conservatory of Music, Oberlin College, quotes from **John Chrysostom**, Antiochene Doctor of the Church, greatest of the Greek Fathers, who lived from 347(?) - 407AD. **He says:**

"David formerly sang in psalms, also we sing today with him; he had a lyre with lifeless strings, the church has a lyre with living strings. **Our tongues are the strings of the lyre**, with a different tone, indeed, but with a more accordant piety." p.145.

Professor Dickinson remarks also concerning **St. Augustine**, 354-430, who was Bishop at Hippo Regis in North Africa:
"He adjured believers not to turn their hearts to theatrical instruments."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“The religious guides of the early Christians felt that there would be an incongruity ... in the use of ... instrumental sound in their ... worship ...

The pure vocal utterance was the more proper expression of their faith.”

Music in the History of the Western Church, pp. 54-55.

At this point *we could ask*, If all the testimony of the early church fathers *is against the use of instruments* in the church, then just *when did* the change in attitude toward the introduction of instruments take place?

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

The American Cyclopedia states:- "**Pope Vitalion** is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of western Europe about 670 AD;

but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of the Franks. in 775-." (Vol. 12, p. 688.)

"Pepin, in turn, presented the organ to the church of St. Corneille at Compiegne." (New International Encyclopedia, Vol.13, p.446.)

McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia says:-

"But students of ecclesiastical archaeology are generally, agreed that instrumental music was not used in churches till a much later date.

(Later than Pope Vitalion in A. D. 660);

Thomas Aquinas. (famous Italian theologian 1225-1274AD) 1250AD, has these remarkable words:-

'Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize.'

From this passage we can strongly say that there was no ecclesiastical use of organs in the time of Aquinas. It is alleged that Marinus Sanutus, who lived about 1290 was the first that brought the use of wind organs into church buildings." Vol. 8, p. 739.)

The Concise Cyclopedia of Religious Knowledge
under the article "Organ," on page 683 states:-
**"At the Reformation they (organs) were discarded,
being considered the vilest remnants of Popery."**

It may come as a surprise to many, to learn that the
Eastern Orthodox Church which according to the
World Almanac for 1955 numbers 125,000,000
members, **never has, at any time in its history
introduced instrumental music.**

John Bingham, author of "**Antiquities of the Christian
Church**", a scholar of the Church of England, remarks:

**"Nor was it (the organ) ever received into
the Greek churches, there being no mention of an
organ in all their liturgies, ancient, or modern."**

Words, Vol.2, pp.482-484, London Ed.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia states:

**"Never has either the organ or any other instrument been employed in public worship in Eastern churches, nor is mention of instrumental music found in all their liturgies, ancient or modern."
Vol. 8, pp. 739.**

Professor John Gibardeau, in his work on

"Music in the Church", written while he was Professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina, a Presbyterian, remarks:-

"It has thus been proved by an appeal to historical facts, that the church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for twelve hundred years." (he means very few congregations used them during this period.)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“and that the Calvinistic Reformed Church ejected it from its services as an element of Popery, even the Church of England having come very nigh to its extrusion from her worship.”

“The historical argument, therefore, combines with the scriptural, to raise a solemn and powerful protest against its employment by the Presbyterian Church. It is heresy in the sphere of worship.” p. 179

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Adam Clark, the respected Methodist commentator says:-

"I believe that the use of such instruments of music in the Christian Church, is without the sanction and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion."

"I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor."

Vol.4, p.686.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

John Wesley, the best known of all **Methodist** ministers, was opposed to the use of instruments in the church. He said:-

"I have NO objection to the organ in our chapel, provided it is neither seen nor heard."

Clarks commentary Vol 4 page 684.

John Calvin. The great reformer, in his commentary on the thirty third Psalm, says:-

"Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

C. H. Spurgeon, the noted **Baptist** minister of the Metropolitan abernacle, London, England.

used no musical instruments in his services.

See Girardeau, "Instrumental Music in the Church." p.176.

The first **Baptist** churches did not use instrumental music in worship, and **its introduction aroused bitter opposition.**

The **Primitive Baptists** have **NEVER** used instrumental music in their worship.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

The **Church of England** in 1560 had to decide whether to continue in the Catholic tradition **or go back to biblical standards** and **instrumental music was finally adopted by a vote of 59 to 58**, the 59th vote was a **PROXY vote** and **again there was bitter opposition.**

LYMAN COLEMAN Presbyterian scholar:-

"it is generally admitted, that the primitive Christians employed NO instrumental music in their religious worship." (Primitive church page 370-1.)

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Martin Luther Founder of **Lutherism** said:-

**" The organ in the worship of God
is an ensign of BAAL."**

The **Free Presbyterian church.
(The wee frees.) Do not use an
instrument in worship even today.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Alexander Campbell, 1788 - 1866.

founder of the "**Disciples of Christ**" was "strong in his rejection of musical instruments in the church."

Kurfees, p.210.

A year after Mr. Campbell died, one of his prominent followers, Dr. H. Christopher, made a stirring appeal **against the use of instruments in the church.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

He said in part:-

"I cannot, therefore, see in all my horizon one fact, argument, reason, or plea, **that can justify us** in using musical instruments in the worship of the church..."

"It is an innovation on apostolic practice ... Let us learn from the experience of others and be content with what God has ordained, and suffer instrumental music and all its concomitants to remain where **they were born, amid the corruption of an apostate church.**" Lord's Quarterly, Oct. 1867, pp. 365-368.

In 1868 **W.K.Pendelton** wrote "This tendency of the religious feeling of the American people is well portrayed in a recent article in the "New York Herald"

"In Public worship, New York now wreaks its religious music.. No pleading on the part of elderly clergymen for the simplicity of form has been of any avail.. Presbyterians have fallen into it.. Methodists exhort its musical notes.. Episcopalians cantillate everything.. Catholics are becoming more so."

"The Baptists only as a body have held aloof and kept to the letter of the original simplicity, and these will no doubt gradually soften and mingle in the general pulp."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Instruments of music were relatively NEW things to those churches in 1868 and the Baptists were the only ones in New York who were said not to have them.

YET many sincere people think that these religious groups have used instruments of music from time immemorial!

Even if all the above were agreed that it could be used in worship, **that would not change what the Bible says**, and there ought to be the key to every debate on all subjects.

The N.T. covenant Says - SING.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Dr MASSEY SHEPHERD jnr Prof of Liturgy in the Divinity school at the University of Chicago

was asked if the early church used instrumental music in worship.

He replied "NO. It was used in the Temple service, but it was not brought into the synagogue."

The Pagan cults used it in their worship.

There were instruments of music used in Pagan worship but not in the church worship, When instruments eventually came in, they were not used to accompany the singing but to give the pitch, this continued down to the middle ages."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“It was **first used in a Jewish synagogue in Berlin** in 1815. under the bitter and violent protest of many of the members. The civil authorities were appealed to, its use prohibited and not permitted until 1818, and **even then a Jew was NOT allowed to play- a non- Jew organist was employed.”**

“It was **not introduced** into the **synagogue** by American Jews until **1840.**

They began to use an organ at Temple Beth Elohim, at Charleston, South Carolina.”

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

The **opposition was exceedingly bitter.**

The vote stood 46 to 40 in favour of its adoption.

The matter was taken to the civil courts.

The decision was against the minority.

The case was appealed but lost again in 1846.

The minority then withdrew
and organized a separate congregation.

**NOTICE HOW TIME AFTER TIME
THOSE WHO WANTED TO INTRODUCE THE INSTRUMENT
WOULD BE PREPARED TO DESTROY A CONGREGATION
IN ORDER TO HAVE THEIR OWN WAY?**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

We have now briefly traced the history of the introduction and general acceptance of instrumental music in Christian worship and testimony.

We have seen that it was very reluctantly accepted by the church and did not gain general approval until after the Reformation.

The character of the accompaniments at first brought in was comparatively simple, being limited to that of the organ, as illustrated in the gift of Constantine to Pepin in 670.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

**Today we find ourselves surrounded
by a strange spectacle.**

**Instrumental music in multiplied forms
has not only been generally accepted
by the professing church.**

**It has largely displaced
the reading of the Word of God,
and the sound and solid
preaching of the word of God.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

It is almost as if what God has to say about ANYTHING no longer matters!

It seems more important that

WE feel good and can please ourselves!

I here quote a paragraph from a four page pamphlet entitled "Music in the Assemblies."

"This is the age of hymnology. Dependence today is placed upon religious music to stir the emotions.

The Word of God is given second place and the Sword of the Spirit is sheathed during fifty, sixty or more percent of radio programs."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“Music is placed so much to the fore and made so attractive that when the Word is finally preached, the audience has lost its desire for the Word.”

**We here quote parts of Mr. Darby's remarks as recorded in his published letters:
He was a friend of DL Moody the Baptist.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

"I rejoice, am bound to rejoice, in every soul converted-must do so- and saved forever.

Nor do I doubt Moody's earnestness,
for I know the man well."

"I see that God is using extraordinary means to awaken His sleeping saints, ... but I am not carried away by it. As to the result of it as a whole, it will not last."

"I fully judge it will foster worldliness in saints. Individuals may be converted; we must rejoice at it; **the effect on the Church of God will be mischievous.**" (Letters, Vol.2, p.308).

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

**"Mr. Moody's work ... avowedly mixes up Christianity with the world and worldly influences, and uses them because it tells in favour of his work, and fosters worldliness and the evils of Christendom."
(Vol.2, p.394).**

"He mixes his activities with what was of the flesh, so as to injure Christians, and mix up the saint and the world." (Vol.2, p.428).

D L Moody's work is said to have been the biggest impact on introducing and making popular the instrument into our worship services today.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Here is quote from "400 Questions and Answers"
compiled by H. B. Coder:-

"As the reality of Christ departs from the soul, ritualism takes the place, and forms without life rise up on every hand."

"To such an extent has this grown that even the world is losing respect for a Christianity which seems more bent on entertaining than converting men."

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

“We believe, therefore, that any use of instrumental music in the worship of God, from end to end, in the Sunday school, the gospel meeting, or any other, ... **will be found to have a tendency to lower the character of Christianity itself.**” pp.212-213.

One is persuaded that the last century of church history has witnessed an accelerated decline in the tone of worship & testimony.

It is our studied conviction that **the increased emphasis on the use of musical instruments, coupled with secular type hymnology, has been a major contributor to the downgrade movement.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

“In many cases the infatuation with musical display has gone so far that elaborate rehearsals of purely musical talent are offered from the preaching platform.”

Instead of the earnest, solemn pleading
of the Spirit-filled preacher
of God's good news concerning His blessed Son.

There is heard **the clatter** of the xylophone,
the strumming of the guitar,
the **plaintive wail** of the violin,
or **the blare** of the trumpet and saxophone.
And all this in the name of Christ!

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Again, look at its effects in modern evangelism.

It has made it a new sort of **entertainment**, and instead of converts marked by having wept in repentance over sin.

By keen separation even from the garment spotted by it, and by a spirit of prayer and devotedness to Christ, **it has formed in them a trifling, pleasure loving mind, destructive of true Christianity.**

Shall we, dear brethren, who are the heirs of such a holy testimony, **betray our trust**, and **yield to the pressure** and pattern of the day to **nulify** that precious heritage?

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

**Rather may we hear the Spirit of God
speaking to us afresh,**

"I give you charge in the sight of God, who quickens all things, and before Christ Jesus,"

"who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Tim. 6:13-14;

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP

THE PURPOSE OF SINGING.

“Praises and thanksgiving to the Lord”

Hebrews 13:15; Acts 16:25; Rom 15:9; James 5:13;

“Teaching and admonishing one another.”

Eph 5:19; Col 3:16;

Singing in Christian worship is to instruct, communicate ideas from one to another and admonish those engaged in it to right living, in addition to being a medium of praise, thanksgiving and supplication to God.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

MANNER OF RENDITION. "Unto God."

**Directed as praise to God and
not for entertainment.**

Music in worship must not degenerate into an effort to entertain; we are singing to please God not the multitude.

Acts 16:25; Rom 15:9; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16;

"In spirit..." 1 Cor 14:15; **with the heart** Eph 5:19;

From these scriptures, we learn that our hearts must accompany our singing and be in accord with the sentiment of song being sung. **It must be done in sincerity.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

"With the understanding." 1 Cor 14:15;

One can hardly sing sincerely what one cannot understand. We need to study the sentiment of the song and be sure that it is scriptural and that we understand its meaning, in order to make that meaning the sentiment of our heart.

"so as to be understood." Eph 5:19; Col 3:16;
PSALMS and HYMNS appear to have been used interchangeably and not only to convey the character in general of the songs to be sung, but in particular that such compositions are to be **'spiritual.'**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

**Nowhere in the New Testament,
Christ's covenant with all men, (Hebrews 8:6;)
is there mention of a man-made instrument
to be used in singing praises to God.**

**The one instrument which is mentioned is the
HEART. It is unnecessary to add any other.
Indeed, it is dangerous to do so, considering
the consequences of disobeying God.**

So WHY would we want to do that?

**Let us follow the law
of the Spirit of Life in Christ.**

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

In view of all the evidence cited as to the absence of music in the **first seven hundred years** of church history; **In view of** the stormy opposition it had to encounter during the **next seven hundred years;**

In view of the pious opposition to it well on into the **nineteenth century.**

May we not justly conclude that **the history** of the Church of God on earth **is overwhelmingly opposed** to the **introduction of musical instruments** into the worship and testimony of the body of Christ today?

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Mechanical instruments in worship to God are unauthorized, unscriptural and unacceptable, and all the efforts to justify and to make it a matter of opinion have been, continue to be, and will continually be in vain.

Look at the effect of instruments in Christian congregations:

It was to help them sing at first; now, dumb in praise to God, they are, instead, getting a treat for themselves from musical art.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Is it any wonder that people compare
the theater with the church?

**They are both out to entertain and pleasure.
What God wants becomes secondary
to WHAT I WANT.**

**Those who look to the Old Testament
to justify their desire for instrumental music
in worship. Show a drastic misunderstanding
of the distinction between
the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.**

Conclusion:- Several questions need to be addressed in the final analysis.

Do we need instruments to sing? No.

Is there a serious danger in introducing them to assist in singing? Yes.

Was the First Century church guided in all areas of its worship by the Holy Spirit? Yes.

Did it follow the synagogue vocal music tradition? Yes.

Could it have followed the Temple tradition? No,

WHY? Because it was not authorized by the Holy Spirit.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

Do we want to get back to the Bible teaching and follow apostolic practice as best as we are able 2,000 years later? YES.

If it is not necessary!

It is dangerous to true worship!
and was not part of the divinely inspired
pattern of worship
for the New Testament church!

Should we then introduce instruments
into our worship today?
NO! - most definitely not.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

It was introduced to please people and entertain in some way.

These are not reasons for practicing it.

If our congregational singing is poor, the answer is to practice, not to add an unnecessary and dangerous prop into worship.

Using an instrument in worship may not be seen by some to be sinful but it can lead to sinful practices, and split churches it is therefore most unwise.

THE SINGING IN WORSHIP!

To Play Or Not To Play?
the QUESTION of the use
of instruments in worship!

The conclusion therefore is
“TO SING IN WORSHIP”

NOT

“TO PLAY IN WORSHIP”

is clearly
THE ANSWER to THE QUESTION.

To SING Or To PLAY? The QUESTION of the use of instruments in worship!

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