

(7) Modern denominations with greatly liberalized views in recent periods have reinstated musical instruments contrary to their founders' pleas.

(8) The eighteenth and nineteenth century plea of restoring original Christianity became, *Let us speak as the Bible speaks and be silent as the Bible is silent*. Since the Bible omits instruments in Christian worship, so did the Restoration Movement.

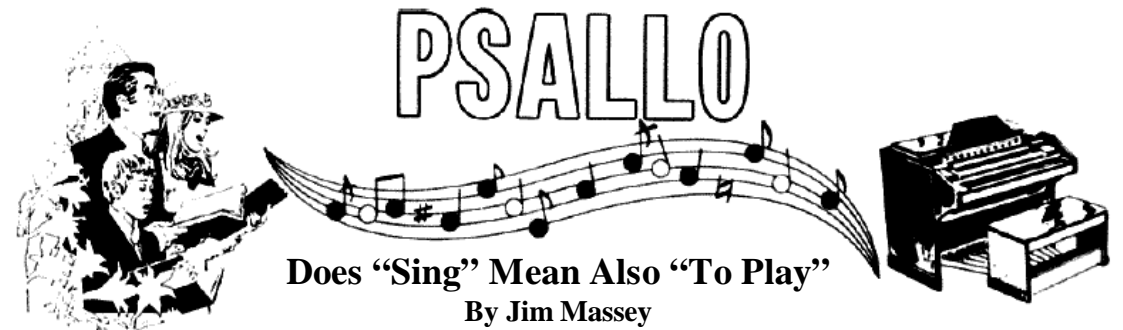
(9) Digressive elements in the Restoration Movement in America caused division by introducing instruments and the missionary society.

(10) Since the restoring of uncorrupted Christian worship and practice is even more urgent in the modernistic 1980's, the plea to restore the authorized vocal music of the apostles is a part of the church's determination to survive. Our only hope is a complete return to the Scriptures and a resolve to bind what the apostles bound and loose what the apostles loosed (*Matthew 18:18*).

Musical instruments in Christian worship must be rejected because the Lord never authorized them, the apostles never sanctioned them, the New Testament writers never commanded them, the apostolic churches never used them, no standard translation includes them, and early Christians never allowed them. *Let us psallo* as early Christians did that we may be exactly what they were.

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This Greek word has been the battleground between advocates and opponents of instrumental music in Christian worship. Other words translated sing (*humneo* and *ado*) are not controversial, but *psallo* presents a strong delusion. *2 Thessalonians 2:10-12* says that God sends a strong delusion to those who do not love the truth so that they may believe a lie. *Psallo* is the means by which either instrumentalists or non-instrumentalists have received a strong delusion and believed a lie.

Is such controversy necessary? Is this matter important? Yes, indeed, for these reasons: The instrument question illustrates the restoration plea to exactly restore original Christianity. To speak as the oracles of God speak (*1 Peter 4:11*), to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (*Jude 3*), and to avoid human traditions which make worship vain (*Mark 7:3-7*) is a valid plea. But the whole endeavor fails when we practice one single unauthorized tradition. Unless instruments inhere in the word *psallo* in the New Testament, instrumental music in worship is unauthorized. To allow anything is to allow everything.

Unless they are included in the New Testament use of the word *psallo*, instruments in worship are a cause of division among Christians versus a safe and sure way. We must make our calling and election sure (*2 Peter 1:10*), we must abide in the doctrine of Christ (*2 John 9, 10*), and we must not add to nor take from what the Bible has said (*Revelation 22:13, 19*). I have never known anyone to say that singing was not safe, but if *psallo* means to play and to sing, then only playing and singing would be safe. Every worshipper would be required to do both, and singing alone would be dangerous and wrong. Singing only is safe, right or wrong.

This is a fundamental matter of faith versus opinion and preference. Jesus came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father (*John 6:38*). Men want to do that which is right in their own eyes (*Judges 17:6*). Abel's worship by faith was accepted, but Cain's substitute was rejected by God (*Hebrews 11:4, 6*). We do by faith only that which is from the Word of God (*Romans 10:17*). Playing in worship cannot be done by faith, unless playing is meant when *psallo* is used in the New Testament.

This controversy illustrates that the Scriptures can be twisted (*2 Peter 3:16*). The Gospel can be perverted or corrupted by change (*Galatians 1:7*). The Word of God can be handled deceitfully (*2 Corinthians 4:2*). Men can err from the truth (*James 5:19*), and preachers can become ministers of Satan (*2 Corinthians 11:13-15*). Whether instrumentalists or non-instrumentalists are false teachers is decided by whether *psallo* contains an accompaniment in its New Testament use.

Our question illustrates the need for Bible authority in a generation which despises authority (*2 Peter 2:10*). We must ask, *By what authority do you do these things?* (*Matthew 21:23*), and *Is that authority from heaven or from men?* (*verse 25*). We must rightly divide general Biblical authority, which allows choice, from specific, explicit authority, which allows no choice. *Psallo* is either specifically sing or generally *make* music in the New Testament.

The command to go shows a choice of ways, since walking, ships, and a chariot were used. Under generic authority any means of going is authorized, as God said to go and did not say specifically how.

The command to baptize is specific and allows no choice. Specific authority by its very nature forbids any substitute, and sprinkling and pouring are excluded because God specified exactly what to do, and no examples of choice are found.

Does God specify the exclusive practice of vocal singing, or does He generally authorize the making of music? The answer begins with a study of words and is confirmed by a study of examples. Of the three New Testament words translated *sing*, *humneo* and *ado* are unquestionably vocal. They never mean anything but sing. But the area of debate arises about *psallo*. Does *psallo* conform to the exclusive meaning of the other words, or does it generalize the command to include accompanied singing or playing?

Psallo was born from the *psao*, *to touch*, and in its pre-New Testament classical Greek usage meant *to pluck* or *to twang an instrument*. In its post-New Testament use in the Byzantine period (300 to 500 A.D.) and in modern usage it had modified its original meaning to become *sing* or *chant* (See in bibliography list recent definitive works by Lampe, Delling, and Smith). The disputed usage is its meaning in New Testament times during the Koine period three hundred years either side of the cross. In this period when either accompanied or unaccompanied singing would be meant by *psallo*, the force of the context in which the word was used becomes extremely important. In this vital area God has certainly not left Himself without witness.

The only way to fully know what any Bible word means is to see what Christians who heard and read the command practiced. Since the other two Greek words (*humneo* and *ado*) are specific for sing, and only *psallo* is disputed, the New Testament presents a strong case for singing as a specific requirement. Jesus sang in the upper room (*Matthew 26:30*), Paul and Silas sang in the prison (*Acts 16:25*), and the Hebrew writer sang in the congregation (*Hebrews 2:12*). Only the specific words for sing are used in these verses.

The other set of references which include *psallo* have strong contextual elements of teaching, confessing, understanding, and glorifying God, all of which require the human voice. *Romans 15:9* stresses singing in the sense of glorifying God and confessing His name. *I Corinthians 14:15* describes singing with the Spirit and with the understanding, which vocal singing can fulfill. *Ephesians 5:19* emphasizes *speaking to yourselves* as a result of being filled with the Spirit. *Colossians 3:16* commands *teaching and admonishing one another* as a result of Christ's Word indwelling richly in all wisdom. *James 5:13* parallels singing with praying, showing the stress on spoken or vocal praise to God. Since such strong and exclusive contexts make no mention of a mechanical instrument but instead stress the heart as God's specified instrument, nowhere in any New Testament passage is there any reason to include the idea of instrumental music.

Christians who heard and read the New Testament commands to sing did nothing else but sing for 600 years. James W. McKinnon examined 150 references to Christian music up to the Middle Ages and found opposition to instruments uniform, vehement, and monolithic (*The Church Fathers and Musical Instruments*, unpublished doctoral dissertation at Columbia University, 1965, pages 260 and 261). See also Dr. Gerherd Delling's entry in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VIII, 492-502, and Everett Ferguson's *A Capella Music in Public Worship*.

The meaning of New Testament commands is found in what New Testament Christians did. The overwhelming witness of total rejection of instruments in worship by Christians for hundreds of years is conclusive and powerful. Clement of Alexandria (about 190 A.D.) is an exception in allowing the lyre and harp in social music at feasts. But the otherwise torrential opposition to instruments even in social and public entertainment makes certain that no Christian would have considered introducing an instrument in worship. The topic was so unthinkable that it never came up!

Advocates of mechanical music in worship have believed a strong delusion that if *psallo* ever meant to *play*, it meant that in the New Testament. But Bible words must be given their meaning at the time when they were used. For instance, an *idiot* was a non-office-holder in ancient times. A *lewd* man was a *layman*. In King James' day *prevent* meant *precede*, and *let* meant to hinder. Try looking in a modern English dictionary for *baptize* or *church* and see how different the meanings are today from the Bible. It is a strong delusion to use a Bible word in any other way than it was being used in its immediate segment of history.

Psallo was used in the New Testament period the way we use our words *make melody* or *sing*. Unless an accompanying instrument was mentioned, no instrument inheres in the word. If I say, *I sing with a guitar*, the word *sing* means only *sing*, but the context adds the guitar. But unless the guitar is in the context, the word *sing* means only *sing*. To add an instrument to the meaning of *sing* is to add to the Word of God.

Ephesians 5:19 makes the instrument *the heart* and parallels *Colossians 3:16: singing with grace in your hearts*. Since God has specified the instrument, no alternative is allowed. Just as when God specified *gopher wood* for the ark, no other wood was allowed. Those who translate *Ephesians 5:19* *heartily* disregard the word *your*, which then becomes a matter of taking away from Scripture. God specified *singing and making melody with one's heart to the Lord*.

Instruments in Christian worship cannot be authorized in the word *psallo*. To add them is to add to the Word of God. It is to sacrifice the plea to do all things by the Bible. It causes division by innovating a tradition of men. It cannot be done by faith. It is a perversion and twisting of Scripture and handling the Word of God deceitfully. Let us call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways.

Frantic efforts by the advocates of instruments turn to the Old Covenant, but this would allow incense, animal sacrifices, polygamy, and other shadows that were nailed to the cross (*Hebrews 10:1, Colossians 2:14*). They then appeal to the figurative harps in heaven, which clearly represent the prayers of saints (*Revelation 5:8, 9*), and which are played by virgins (*Revelation 14:2—4*). No one takes the virgins literally, so how can we literalize their harps?

The stages of acceptance of instrumental music show its true colors as an innovation. The following are the steps of acceptance or rejection as they happened historically: (1) Gerherd Delling in his book *Worship in the New Testament* conclusively shows that first century synagogue songs were sung without accompaniment. This means that psalms and hymns without instruments would have been the practice of the synagogues that were often converted into Christian assemblies (*James 2:2*). (2) No evidence of instrumental music can be produced from the words used or from the practice described in the apostolic-church in the New Testament.

(3) The early church writers voiced strong opposition to instruments socially, which shows that instruments would have been unthinkable in worship assemblies. (4) The departing church allowed instruments to appear in the sixth century and to become widespread in the eighth century. (5) The Roman Catholic Church practiced instrumental music along with images, sprinkling, and countless other substitutes, but the Greek Catholic Church rejected and still rejects instrumental music.

(6) The Protestant Reformation with its plea of Scriptures only rejected musical instruments as traditions of Rome. John Calvin typically said, *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 papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews.*