



“Why Don’t You Use Instrumental Music in Your Worship?”

Let’s look, first, at ALL the N.T. passages that speak of the type music we should offer to God.

New Testament Passages

- “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing** hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them” (Acts 16:25).
- “and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written, ‘For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and **sing** to Your name’” (Romans 15:9, which quotes from 2 Sam. 22:50 and Psa. 18:49).

New Testament Passages

- “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding. I will **sing** with the spirit, and I will also **sing** with the understanding” (1 Corinthians 14:15).
- “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

New Testament Passages

- “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” (Colossians 3:16).
- “saying: I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will **sing** praise to You” (Hebrews 2:12, quoting from Psalms 22:22).
- “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him **sing** psalms” (James 5:13).

Observations From These Verses

- We did NOT include two verses (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26), because they refer to a time **before** the church was established.
 - “And when they [Jesus and His apostles] had **sung** a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
- They do not all bear directly on public worship (Acts 16:25; James 5:13).

Observations From These Verses

- What they **ALL** do, though, is authorize singing.
- **NONE** of them authorize playing an instrument.
- Christians, at least for many years, had no trouble understanding these instructions.
 - Historical evidence is clear that local churches did not use instruments until at least several **centuries** later.

Where Some Have Sought Authority

- In the Old Testament.
 - Instruments were certainly used in O.T. worship (2 Chron. 29:25), but the O.T. was “a shadow of things to come” (Col. 2:17)—not a source of authority.
 - Anyone interested in restoring all the elements of O.T. worship? (e.g., animal sacrifices, separate priesthood).
 - Interesting that none of those quotes from the O.T. we read earlier didn’t include any references to instrumental music.

Where Some Have Sought Authority

- In the highly figurative throne scenes described in the Book of Revelation (“harps” in 5:8; 14:2; 15:2).
 - Any bearing on what we do in worship today?
 - Should we also wear white robes (7:13–14)?
 - Carry golden bowls full of incense (5:8)?
 - Bring the ark of the covenant into our assemblies (11:19)?

Where Some Have Sought Authority

- In the use of the Greek word, “psallo,” in Ephesians 5:19 (“singing and making melody (psallo) in your heart”).
 - **Thayer:** 1) to pluck off, pull out; 2) to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang
 - Used in ancient Greek literature to refer to pulling or plucking one’s hair, a chalk line, etc.
 - In Septuagint “psallo”, at least in some cases, refers to strictly vocal music (Psalms 135:3; 138:1; 146:2).

Where Some Have Sought Authority

- In the use of the Greek word, “psallo,” in Ephesians 5:19 (“singing and making melody (psallo) in your heart”).
 - Actually, what is “pulled” or “plucked” is specified.
 - “singing and making melody **with your heart to the Lord**” (Eph. 5:19, NASV).
 - “Make melody to Him **with an instrument of ten strings**” (Psalms 33:2).

Where Some Have Sought Authority

- In the use of the Greek word, “psallo,” in Ephesians 5:19 (“singing and making melody (psallo) in your heart”).
 - “Psallo” is translated “sing” in Romans 15:9 and 1 Corinthians 14:15; and “sing psalms” or “sing praises” in James 5:13.
 - If “psallo” required an instrument, we would ALL have to play one.

Where Some Have Sought Authority

- In the assertion that instruments are merely an **aid** to singing (glasses to seeing, cane to walking).
 - An aid is authorized only if the thing being aided is authorized (trays for the Lord's supper, classrooms, etc.).
 - We can certainly use things to aid us in singing (pitch pipes, song books).
 - It really boils down to this question: can we sing **AND** play?
 - When the Lord is specific, we must specifically do what He says (e. g., the instructions given to Noah).

Where Some Have Sought Authority

- In the fact that God doesn't say NOT to use instruments.
 - What if we included everything God didn't specifically forbid?
 - We must abide within the doctrine of Christ (1 John 2:24; 2 John 1:9), which means that we cannot add to, take from, or change in any way what is revealed in the N.T. (Rev. 22:18–19; Gal. 3:15; 1:6–9).
 - We are limited to what is written!

Interesting Quotes

- “To proceed beyond what we are there warranted by him [Paul] is not only, I must say, unadvised zeal, but wicked and perverse obstinacy.”
 - John Calvin, in his commentary on Psalms 33.
- “With no command, example, or any indication whatsoever that the Lord desires instrumental music in public worship, we have no warrant for their use.”
 - John Price, a Baptist preacher, *Old Light on New Worship*.



“Why Don’t You Use Instrumental Music in Your Worship?”

Why DO you use them?

Please show me the authority for such.