

Singing in Worship

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INTRODUCTION

Singing is one of the most vital and vibrant elements of Christian worship, allowing expression of the soul's deepest emotions. In this lesson, we want to examine the parallel passages in Ephesians and Colossians that address the subject of singing (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17).

Ephesians 5:18-20 (NASB95) — 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

Colossians 3:16-17 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Ephesians 5:18-19, NASB	Col 3:16, NASB
And do not get drunk with wine	
but be filled with the Spirit	Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom
speaking to one another	teaching and admonishing one another
in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs	with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing and making melody with your heart	singing with thankfulness in your hearts
to the Lord	to God

AND DO NOT GET DRUNK WITH WINE, FOR THAT IS DISSIPATION

Ephesians 5:18 (NASB95) — 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

Paul, the inspired apostle says, "Do not get drunk." The Greek verb *methuskō*, the causative form of *methuō* [to be drunken], is defined as "to make drunk" [Thomas 3182]. BDAG say it

means “get drunk, become intoxicated with wine.” This word occurs 5x in the NT (Luke 12:45; John 2:10; Eph. 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:7; Rev. 17:2). Such behavior may be common among unfaithful servants (Luke 12:45-46), and those who exchange their souls for material gain (Rev. 17:1-2), but not of the saints in light (Eph. 5:18-19; 1 Thess. 5:7-8).

*Luke 12:45 (NASB95) — 45 “But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and ***get *drunk**;*

*John 2:10 (NASB95) — 10 and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have ***drunk** freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.”*

*Ephesians 5:18 (NASB95) — 18 And do not ***get *drunk** with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,*

*1 Thessalonians 5:7 (NASB95) — 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who ***get *drunk** get drunk at night.*

*Revelation 17:2 (NASB95) — 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were ***made *drunk** with the wine of her immorality.”*

Luke 12:45-46 (NASB95) — 45 “But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

Revelation 17:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.”

*Ephesians 5:18 (NASB95) — 18 And do not ***get *drunk** with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,*

1 Thessalonians 5:7-8 (NASB95) — 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Why? Drunkenness leads to dissipation. Thomas defines *asōtia*, translated “dissipation,” a compound of the negative prefix and *sōzō* [to save], as “unsavedness, i.e. wastefulness” [810]. BDAG say the verb *sōzō* refers to preservation, hence *asōtia* generally denotes ‘wastefulness,’ then reckless abandon, debauchery, dissipation, profligacy, especially exhibited in convivial gatherings.” Louw & Nida say it refers to “behavior which shows lack of concern or thought for the consequences of an action.” This word occurs 3x in the NT (Eph. 5:18; Titus 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:4).

*Ephesians 5:18 (NASB95) — 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is ***dissipation**, but be filled with the Spirit,*

*Titus 1:6 (NASB95) — 6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of ***dissipation** or rebellion.*

*1 Peter 4:4 (NASB95) — 4 In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of ***dissipation**, and they malign you;*

Sinful men often live lives of reckless abandon, engaging in unrestrained wantonness, being given over to profligacy and prodigality (Luke 15:11-13, 29-30; 1 Pet. 4:1-4). In contrast with the coarse and vulgar songs of those drunk with wine, those who are Spirit-filled sing praises to God. Consider how the conduct of Paul and Silas differed from typical prisoners when they were jailed at Philippi (Acts 16:23-25).

Luke 15:11-13 (NASB95) — 11 And He said, “A man had two sons. 12 “The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So he divided his wealth between them. 13 “And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.

Luke 15:29-30 (NASB95) — 29 “But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’

1 Peter 4:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. 4 In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;

Acts 16:23-25 (NASB95) — 23 When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT/LET THE WORD OF CHRIST RICHLY DWELL WITHIN YOU, WITH ALL WISDOM

Ephesians 5:18 (NASB95) — 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

Colossians 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

How can one be filled with the Spirit? Depending upon the context, the expression can have a miraculous or non-miraculous meaning.

In reference to the craftsman Bezalel, it refers to his artistic talent used in constructing the tabernacle (Exod. 31:1-11, esp. vs. 3-4; 35:30-35, esp. vs. 31-32).

*Exodus 31:1-11 (NASB95) — 1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 **“I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, 5 and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship. 6 “And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you: 7 the tent of meeting, and the ark of testimony, and the mercy seat upon it, and all the furniture of the tent, 8 the table also and its utensils, and the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, 9 the altar of burnt offering also with all its utensils, and the laver and its stand, 10 the woven garments as well, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, with which to carry on their priesthood; 11 the anointing oil also, and the fragrant incense for the holy place, they are to make them according to all that I have commanded you.”***

*Exodus 35:30-35 (NASB95) — 30 Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, “See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 31 **“And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; 32 to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, 33 and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. 34 “He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and***

Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35 "He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple and in scarlet material, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs.

In regard to the prophet Micah, it refers to his prophetic calling and gift (Mic. 3:5-12, esp. vs. 8; cf. 1:1; Jer. 26:18).

*Micah 3:5-12 (NASB95) — 5 Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray; When they have something to bite with their teeth, They cry, "Peace," But against him who puts nothing in their mouths They declare holy war. 6 Therefore it will be night for you—without vision, And darkness for you—without divination. The sun will go down on the prophets, And the day will become dark over them. 7 The seers will be ashamed And the diviners will be embarrassed. Indeed, they will all cover their mouths Because there is no answer from God. **8 On the other hand I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the Lord— And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.** 9 Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And twist everything that is straight, 10 Who build Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with violent injustice. 11 Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord saying, "Is not the Lord in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us." 12 Therefore, on account of you Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest.*

Micah 1:1 (NASB95) — 1 The word of the Lord which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 26:18 (NASB95) — 18 "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus the Lord of hosts has said, "Zion will be plowed as a field, And Jerusalem will become ruins, And the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." ' "

For the apostles on the day of Pentecost, it identifies their baptism in the Holy Spirit, and subsequent supernatural empowerment (Acts 2:1-4).

Acts 2:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

For Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, it refers to Jesus' promise of divine guidance (Acts 4:5-10; cf. Matt. 10:17-20).

Acts 4:5-10 (NASB95) — 5 On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; 6 and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. 7 When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.

Matthew 10:17-20 (NASB95) — 17 "But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; 18 and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 "But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. 20 "For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Although Paul was the last of the apostles, born out of due season, he enjoyed similar divine gifts (Acts 9:15-16; 13:1-12; Eph. 3:1-7).

Acts 9:15-16 (NASB95) — 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

Acts 13:1-12 (NASB95) — 1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 When they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, 10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? 11 "Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is

upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time.” And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

Ephesians 3:1-7 (NASB95) — 1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you; 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

At other times, the expression, “filled with the spirit,” generally refers to the fruits of a spirit led life (Acts 13:48-52; Eph. 5:18-20).

Acts 13:48-52 (NASB95) — 48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18-20 (NASB95) — 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

The Holy Spirit and the Word of God both perform the same agency in convicting and converting the sinner. Both give life (2 Cor. 3:6; James 1:18). Both sanctify (John 17:17; 1 Cor. 6:11). Both are said to indwell believers (Rom. 8:11; Col. 3:16). Both are instrumental in the salvation of our souls (Titus 3:5; James 1:21). We are born of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8) and also of the word of God (1 Pet. 1:23).

2 Corinthians 3:6 (NASB95) — 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

James 1:18 (NASB95) — 18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

John 17:17 (NASB95) — 17 “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NASB95) — 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Romans 8:11 (NASB95) — 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Colossians 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Titus 3:5 (NASB95) — 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

James 1:21 (NASB95) — 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

John 3:8 (NASB95) — 8 “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

1 Peter 1:23 (NASB95) — 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

Therefore, what the Spirit does to convert and save men, He does it through the revealed word, the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17). Whatever is declared of the Holy Spirit is also declared of the Word of God. This does not mean that they are the same, but the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), the instrument by which God operates upon the hearts of men. Therefore, we must heed God’s word (Matt. 13:9), handling it rightly (2 Tim. 2:15), hiding it in our hearts (Psa. 119:11).

Romans 1:16-17 (NASB95) — 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

Ephesians 6:17 (NASB95) — 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Matthew 13:9 (NASB95) — 9 “He who has ears, let him hear.”

2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB95) — 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Psalm 119:11 (NASB95) — 11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

SPEAKING TO ONE ANOTHER/TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER

Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95) — 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Colossians 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Singing is a wonderfully effective tool for mutual edification (Eph. 4:29), enabling us to express sentiments and thoughts that might otherwise be difficult to articulate, empowering us to be teachers of God's word (Col. 1:28). The same Greek word that appears in Colossians 3:16 translated "teaching and admonishing" is rendered "warning every man and teaching every man" in Colossians 1:28. Through singing, we exhort and admonish one another, and also praise and honor the Lord.

Ephesians 4:29 (NASB95) — 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Colossians 1:28 (NASB95) — 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS/WITH PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

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Psalms

Thomas defines *psalmos*, derived from *psallō* [to pull, twitch, twang, play, sing], as "a striking (of musical strings), a psalm." BDAG say "in our literature, [it is used] only [of a] song of praise, psalm in accordance with OT usage, (1) of OT Psalms; (2) of Christian songs of praise." This word occurs 7x in the NT (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

*Luke 20:42 (NASB95) — 42 “For David himself says in the book of ***Psalms**, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand,*

*Luke 24:44 (NASB95) — 44 Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the ***Psalms** must be fulfilled.”*

*Acts 1:20 (NASB95) — 20 “For it is written in the book of ***Psalms**, ‘Let his homestead be made desolate, And let no one dwell in it’; and, ‘Let another man take his office.’*

*Acts 13:33 (NASB95) — 33 that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second ***Psalm**, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.’*

*1 Corinthians 14:26 (NASB95) — 26 What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a ***psalm**, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*

*Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95) — 19 speaking to one another in ***psalms** and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;*

*Colossians 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with ***psalms** and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

This word may be used in two senses, referring to (1) the book of Psalms, the third section of the Hebrew OT, following the Law and the Prophets (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33); or (2), generally, of songs of praise by believers in the Christian era (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

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Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary says, "The Book of Psalms is a collection of prayers, poems, and hymns that focus the worshiper's thoughts on God in praise and adoration. Parts of this book were used as a hymnal in the worship services of ancient Israel... With 150 individual psalms, this book has the most chapters of any in the Bible. It is also one of the most diverse, since the psalms deal with such subjects as God and His creation, war, worship, wisdom, sin and evil, judgment, justice, and the coming of the Messiah. Through these hymns of praise, we come face to face with our Maker and Redeemer. In the glory of His presence, we are compelled to exclaim along with the psalmist, 'O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!' (8:1)."

"We may think of the psalms as a description of our human response to God. At times God is presented in all His majesty and glory. Our response is wonder, awe, and fear: 'Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth' (68:32). But other psalms portray God as a loving Lord who is involved in our lives. Our response in these cases is to draw close to His comfort and security: 'I will fear no evil; for You are with me' (23:4).

"God is the same Lord in both these psalms. But we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific needs of our lives. What a marvelous God we worship, the psalmist declares — One who is high and lifted up beyond our human experiences but also one who is close enough to touch and who walks beside us along life's way" [R. F Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, & R. K. Harrison, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), s.v. "Psalms, Book of"].

Like Old Testament psalms, Christian songs express a wide range of themes and feelings. We address God on different levels, singing "A mighty fortress is our God," and also "Lead me gently home, Father."

Hymns

Thomas defines *hymnos* as "a hymn" [5215]. BDAG say it refers to "a song with religious content, hymn/song of praise especially in honor of a deity." Louw & Nida define it as "a song with religious content." This word occurs 2x in the NT (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

*Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95) — 19 speaking to one another in psalms and *hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;*

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Praise offered to God is a major theme of the Bible. A NASB concordance search on “praise AND (God OR Lord)” yields 117 results. God’s people must continually praise Him (Psa. 7:17; 34:1; 69:30; etc.). Kittel says, “Christ’s word lives in the church’s songs to God, which extol from the heart his saving work (Col. 3:16). In Ephesians 5:19 praise is addressed to the Lord with God’s saving work again as the theme. Emphasis is given in v. 19 by the verbs ‘singing and making melody’ (cf. Psa. 27:6).”

Psalm 7:17 (NASB95) — 17 I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

Psalm 34:1 (NASB95) — 1 I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 69:30 (NASB95) — 30 I will praise the name of God with song And magnify Him with thanksgiving.

Psalm 27:6 (NASB95) — 6 And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

Spiritual Songs

Thomas defines the adjective *pneumatikos* as “spiritual” [4152] and the noun *ōdē* as “a song, ode” [5603]. Louw & Nida define *pneumatikos*, in its present usage, as “pertaining to a pattern of life controlled or directed by God’s Spirit.” Furthermore, *ōdē* refers to “a particular melodic pattern with verbal content.” BDAG say the former “pertains to spirit as [the] inner life of a human being, spiritual,” and the latter is used, in our literature, “only of sacred song, a song of praise to God.” The former occurs 26x in the NT (Rom. 1:11; 7:14; 15:27; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2:15; 3:1; 9:11; 10:3, 4; 12:1; 14:1, 37; 15:44, 46; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 1:3; 5:19; 6:12; Col. 1:9; 3:16; 1 Pet 2:5) and the latter occurs 7x in 5 NT verses (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3). Obviously, singing in Christian worship must have a spiritual focus.

*1 Corinthians 2:13 (NASB95) — 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining *spiritual thoughts with *spiritual words.*

1 Corinthians 2:15 (NASB95) — 15 But he who is ***spiritual** appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.

1 Corinthians 3:1 (NASB95) — 1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to ***spiritual** men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:11 (NASB95) — 11 If we sowed ***spiritual** things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

1 Corinthians 10:3 (NASB95) — 3 and all ate the same ***spiritual** food;

1 Corinthians 10:4 (NASB95) — 4 and all drank the same ***spiritual** drink, for they were drinking from a ***spiritual** rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NASB95) — 1 Now concerning ***spiritual** gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

1 Corinthians 14:1 (NASB95) — 1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly ***spiritual** gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:37 (NASB95) — 37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or ***spiritual**, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

1 Corinthians 15:44 (NASB95) — 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a ***spiritual** body. If there is a natural body, there is also a ***spiritual** body.

1 Corinthians 15:46 (NASB95) — 46 However, the ***spiritual** is not first, but the natural; then the ***spiritual**.

Galatians 6:1 (NASB95) — 1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are ***spiritual**, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

Ephesians 1:3 (NASB95) — 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every ***spiritual** blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95) — 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and ***spiritual** songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Ephesians 6:12 (NASB95) — 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the ***spiritual** forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Colossians 1:9 (NASB95) — 9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all ***spiritual** wisdom and understanding,

*Colossians 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and ***spiritual** songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

*1 Peter 2:5 (NASB95) — 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a ***spiritual** house for a holy priesthood, to offer up ***spiritual** sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

*Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95) — 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual ***songs**, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;*

*Colossians 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual ***songs**, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

*Revelation 5:9 (NASB95) — 9 And they sang a new ***song**, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.*

*Revelation 14:3 (NASB95) — 3 And they sang a new ***song** before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the ***song** except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.*

*Revelation 15:3 (NASB95) — 3 And they sang the ***song** of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the ***song** of the Lamb, saying, “Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!*

SINGING AND MAKING MELODY WITH YOUR HEART/SINGING WITH THANKFULNESS IN YOUR HEARTS

Singing

Thomas defines *adō* as “to sing” [103]. BDAG say it means to “sing (in praise).” This word occurs 5x in the NT (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3). While dwelling on earth, Christians praise God and admonish one another by singing (with thankfulness) and making melody in their hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In the heavenly realm, the redeemed sing a new song of praise (Rev. 5:9; 14:3). They also sing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:3).

*Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95) — 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, ***singing** and making melody with your heart to the Lord;*

*Colossians 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, ***singing** with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

*Revelation 5:9 (NASB95) — 9 And they ***sang** a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.*

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*Revelation 15:3 (NASB95) — 3 And they ***sang** the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!*

Making Melody

Thomas defines *psallō*, derived from *psaō* [to rub], as “to pull, twitch, twang, play, sing” [5567]. Swanson says it means to “sing praises, make music with [the] voice.” This word occurs 5x in 4 NT verses (Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; James 5:13).

*Romans 15:9 (NASB95) — 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, “Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, And I will ***sing** to Your name.”*

*1 Corinthians 14:15 (NASB95) — 15 What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will ***sing** with the spirit and I will ***sing** with the mind also.*

*Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95) — 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, ***singing** and making melody with your heart to the Lord;*

*James 5:13 (NASB95) — 13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to ***sing** praises.*

The 1979 Edition of Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich & Danker (BAGD) defines *psallō* as “in our literature, in accordance with OT usage, sing, sing praise of the one for whom the praise is intended... The original meaning of *psallō* was ‘pluck’, ‘play’ (a stringed instrument); this persisted at least to the time of Lucian. In the LXX, *psallō* frequently means ‘sing’, whether to the accompaniment of a harp or (as usually) not (Psa. 7:18; 9:12; 107:4; al.). This process continued until *psallō* in Modern Greek means ‘sing’ exclusively; cf. ψάλτης=singer, chanter, with no reference to instrumental accompaniment. Although the NT does not voice opposition to instrumental music, in view of Christian resistance to mystery cults, as well as Pharisaic aversion to musical instruments in worship, it is likely that some such sense as **make melody** is best here...”

*Psalm 7:17 (NASB95) — 17 I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness
And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.*

*Psalm 9:11 (NASB95) — 11 Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion; Declare among
the peoples His deeds.*

*Psalm 107:4 (NASB95) — 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region; They did
not find a way to an inhabited city.*

Little Kittel offers the following comments “In Ephesians. 5:19 praise is addressed to the Lord with God’s saving work again as the theme. Emphasis is given in v. 19 by the verbs ‘singing and making melody’ (cf. Psa. 27:6). *Psallōntes* [the form of the verb Ephesians 5:10 – i.e., present, active, participle, masculine, plural, nominative, from *PSALLO*, meaning, ‘to pull, twitch, twang, play, sing,’ MM] does **not** now denote literally playing on a stringed instrument, and the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs hardly refer to different kinds of texts.”

*Psalm 27:6 (NASB95) — 6 And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around
me, And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing
praises to the Lord.*

In summary, while *psallō* once included the use of instruments, the word changed over time; in the NT, it refers to singing. A careful reading of Ephesians 5:19 reveals the instrument under consideration. For Christian worship to be acceptable, we must pluck the heartstrings. In other words, we sing from the heart with genuine emotion and feeling.

TO THE LORD/TO GOD

Everything we do, including singing, is ultimately to glorify God (Rom. 14:7-8; Col. 3:23-24). This applies both to our worship assemblies and the activities of everyday life.

*Romans 14:7-8 (NASB95) — 7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for
himself; 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore
whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.*

*Colossians 3:23-24 (NASB95) — 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the
Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of
the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*

CONCLUSION

Are we worshipping God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24)? Is our singing a joyous expression of devotion and thanksgiving (James 5:13)? Self-examination is needed: Do we think about what we are singing, or do we find ourselves daydreaming? Are we more interested in technical

precision of the music than in the sentiments of the song? For worship to be acceptable, we must sing with grace in our hearts, being empowered by a spirit of joy, faith and gratitude. Let us focus on our song service with a view to improvement!

John 4:23-24 (NASB95) — 23 “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

James 5:13 (NASB95) — 13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.