

Instrumental Music

By Mark Mayberry

1/28/2018

Introduction

Christianity is a religion of faith (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:7). In other words, our lives, our service, and our worship must be patterned after a "Thus saith the Lord..." (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11). Sadly, many follow man-made systems of religion without ever asking if such a course is acceptable to the Lord (Matt. 7:21-23).

Galatians 2:20 ... 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

2 Corinthians 5:7 ... 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight --

Colossians 3:17 ... 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.

1 Peter 4:11 ... 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 7:21-23 ... 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Sometimes our neighbors ask, "Why do churches of Christ not use instrumental music in their worship?" The answer is simple. We reject the use of mechanical instruments of music because there is no New Testament authority for such a practice. When the New Testament makes reference to music as an expression of worship, without exception, the focus is on **singing** (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13). One can safely conclude that, in the present dispensation, God desires us to worship Him in song.

Matthew 26:30 ... 30 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:26 ... 26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Acts 16:25 ... 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

Romans 15:9 ... 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, I "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Your name."

1 Corinthians 14:15 ... 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 ... 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 ... 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.

Hebrews 2:12 ... 12 saying, "I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise."

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

In spite of the plain teaching of Scripture, many still try to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music. Therefore, let us examine some of the arguments made in favor of instrumental music. A diligent study of each point will show that these arguments are not valid or convincing.

Some Say, "It Is an Expedient"

Some try to justify instrumental music by saying, "It is an expedient." Webster defines an expedient as something "useful for effecting a desired result; suited to the circumstances or the occasion; advantageous, convenient." Yes, certain things in religion can be justified as expedients, but there are Biblical principles that must be applied and respected.

For a thing to be expedient, it must first be lawful, i.e., it must fall within the boundaries of what God has authorized. If there is no command, approved example, or necessary inference in the New Testament to permit a practice, then it must be avoided (Matt. 15:7-9; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2 John 1:9).

Matthew 15:7-9 ... 7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' "

Colossians 3:17 ... 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.

2 Timothy 1:13 ... 13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

2 John 1:9 ... 9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

Consider the tragic example of Uzzah in the Old Testament (2 Sam. 6:6-7). He surely thought he was justified when he reached out to steady the ark when the oxen stumbled, but he sadly discovered that an act could be an expedient if it is unlawful. The Mosaic Law forbade anyone from touching the ark (Num. 4:15). Uzzah acted without thinking and paid dearly for his mistake.

2 Samuel 6:6-7 ... 6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. 7 And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

Numbers 4:15 ... 15 "When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, so that they will not touch the holy objects and die. These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

Recognize that an expediency has to do with the best choice among authorized options. Certain things may fall within the realm of God's commandments and assist us in obeying His will. For example, communion plates and cups help in serving the Lord's Supper. A church building is often the most expedient way of carrying out God's command to assemble. However, when God specified precisely what He desires, man is not free to do something else, and call it an expedient. To go beyond that which is divinely authorized, and offer a human substitute, is to incur the guilt of adding to God's word (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

Deuteronomy 4:2 ... 2 "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32 ... 32 "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.

Proverbs 30:6 ... 6 Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Revelation 22:18-19 ... 18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

This principle is illustrated through the Bible's teaching on baptism. The New Testament repeatedly pictures baptism as a "burial" (Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12), and the Greek word itself means "to dip, plunge, or immerse." Some would argue that sprinkling is simply a way to carry out God's command concerning baptism. Not so! Sprinkling is a substitute. God has specified the "mode" of baptism, and nothing else will suffice.

Acts 8:38-39 ... 38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

Romans 6:3-4 ... 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Colossians 2:12 ... 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

When God commanded us to make music in worship, He specified what kind of music He desired: **singing** (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16). Thus, we cannot justify instrumental music as an expedient. It is not merely an aid, but is an unauthorized addition to God's Word, and, therefore, cannot be practiced "by faith."

Ephesians 5:18-19 ... 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;

Colossians 3:16 ... 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.

Some Say, "It Was Used in the Old Testament"

Many defend the use of instrumental music by saying, "It was used in the Old Testament" (2 Chron. 29:25; Ps. 150:1-6). However, we are no longer under the Old Testament. The Law of Moses served its purpose, and it has now been abolished (Gal. 3:22-25; Eph. 2:13-16; Col. 2:14-16). Those who are living today are under law to Christ (1 Cor. 9:20-21), being subject to the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).

2 Chronicles 29:25 ... 25 He then stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with harps and with lyres, according to the command of David and of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for the command was from the Lord through His prophets.

Psalms 150:1-6 ... 1 Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse. 2 Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. 3 Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. 4 Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Galatians 3:22-25 ... 22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Ephesians 2:13-16 ... 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

Colossians 2:14-16 ... 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of

them, having triumphed over them through Him. 16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—

1 Corinthians 9:20-21 ... 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

James 1:25 ... 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Certainly, many practices remain constant from dispensation to dispensation. However, others are unique to a particular age. This principle is applicable to the type music that God desires. In the Old Testament, God allowed various forms of instrumental music, but the New Testament pattern is dramatically different: In every instance, disciples worshipped God in song. Along with animal sacrifices, burning incense, circumcision, a distinction between clean and unclean meats, instrumental music was unique to the Old Testament. One who seeks justification based on the Old Testament is obligated to keep every requirement of Moses. Paul warned the Judaizing teachers, saying, "I testify to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. 5:1-4). The same statement could be made to those who would reach back to the Law of Moses to justify instrumental music.

Galatians 5:1-4 ... 1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Some Say, "It Is Not Explicitly Forbidden"

Others would argue for the use of instrumental music by saying, "God didn't, 'Do not use it!'" However, such a premium on silence could justify almost anything. The Bible does not have to specifically condemn something for it to be wrong. Faith is based on the Word of God (Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:7). The examples of faith who are honored in Hebrews 11 all did what God commanded: By faith, Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice. By faith, Enoch walked with God. By faith, Noah built an ark. By faith, Abraham left Mesopotamia and dwelt in Canaan. Our Father has clearly and positively stated that He wants us to worship him in song. When God specifies what he wants, unauthorized alternatives are excluded.ⁱ

Romans 10:17 ... 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:7 ... 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight—

There is a maxim of law, which states that the expression of one thing is the exclusion of another. It must be so, for otherwise legal contracts would not be definite, and there would be no precise understanding of law. In the Patriarchal dispensation, God commanded Noah to make an ark of gopher-wood. This positive command disallowed the use of any other kind of wood. In the Mosaic dispensation, when the Passover was instituted, God specified what sort of animal was to be killed.ⁱⁱ It was to be one year old - not two or three; it was to be without blemish - not with a blemish; it was to be offered on the fourteenth day of the month - not some other day; the blood was to be applied to the door-posts and lintels - not elsewhere. The same principle applies here! In the Christian dispensation, God told us to worship him in song, and this eliminates playing an instrument.

Some Say, "It Is Used in Our Homes"

Many would support the use of instrumental music by saying, "It is used in our homes." However, we also have lawn mowers, hair dryers and washing machines at home, but what does that prove? Let us not confuse these two realms. Individuals may do many things in their private lives that have no role in our public worship or collective responsibility (Mark 7:1-8; 1 Cor. 11:20-22; 1 Tim. 5:16).

*Mark 7:1-8 ... 1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, 2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) 5 The Pharisees and the scribes *asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" 6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 7 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' 8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."*

1 Corinthians 11:20-22 ... 20 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, 21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.

1 Timothy 5:16 ... 16 If any [man or woman, KJV] woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

Some Say, "It Will Be Found in Heaven"

Others would advocate the use of instrumental music by saying, "The Book of Revelation speaks of it in heaven" (Rev. 5:8; 14:1-2; 15:1-2). However, let us realize that the Book of Revelation is filled with symbolic imagery, and is an abuse of the text to literalize those symbols. John describes various colored horses, bowls of wrath, burning incense, living creatures covered with eyes, a sea of glass, etc. Heaven is described in physical terms that we can understand, but we must never forget it is a spiritual realm.

Revelation 5:8 ... 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 14:1-2 ... 1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.

Revelation 15:1-2 ... 1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. 2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

Will physical instruments of music be found in heaven? No. Heaven is not a physical realm (1 Cor. 15:50). The Book of Revelation describes the majestic chorus of 144,000 voices as they sing praises to God (Rev. 14:1-3). The heavenly chorus was characterized by great volume (as the voice of many waters and great thunder), and beautiful harmony (the voice of harpers).ⁱⁱⁱ

1 Corinthians 15:50 ... 50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Revelation 14:1-3 ... 1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the

sound of harpists playing on their harps. 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.

Furthermore, we must understand that Revelation is picturing a different realm or dispensation. Those who lived under the Mosaic dispensation will be judged by the Law of Moses. Those of us who live under the Christian dispensation will be judged by the gospel of Christ. Our focus should be on what is required of us during this Christian age. Whatever God does or demands in a future dispensation is His business. All we can do is submit to the standard currently in force.

Some Say, "It Is Supported by the Greek"

As we examine passages in the New Testament that describe occasions of worship, and the type music that was employed by disciples of Jesus, a consistent pattern is evident.

Nine passages provide examples of believers who sang praises to God or offer divinely inspired instruction relating to this expression of worship (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13). Additionally, Hebrews 13:15 offers the following related admonition: "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."

*After **singing a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30).*

*After **singing a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26).*

*But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns of praise** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them (Acts 16:25).*

*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" (Rom. 15:9).*

*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 (1 Cor. 14:15).*

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

*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 (Col. 3:16).*

saying, "I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will **sing** Your praise" (Heb. 2:12).

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name (Heb. 13:15, NASB95)

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

In these passages, the following Greek words are employed: The verb *humneō* occurs four times (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12). The verb *adō* occurs five times (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3). The verb *psallō* occurs four times (Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; James 5:13). An examination of these words and their NT usage reveals a consistent pattern: Early disciples worshipped God with songs of praise, not with the use of instrumental music.

The Verb Humneō

The Greek verb *humneō* (ὑμνέω), derived from *humnos* (a hymn), means "to sing to, to laud" (Thomas 5214).

BDAG define it as "to sing a song in a cultic setting, esp. of praise and celebration; (a) [transitive] sing in praise to, sing in praise of (Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12; Ps. 21:23); (b) [intransitive] sing (a hymn) (Ps. 64:14; Matt 26:30).

Occurring five times in the NT, in the NASB, it is rendered "singing a hymn" (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26), "singing hymns of praise" (Acts 16:25), and "sing... praise" (Heb. 2:12).

*After **singing a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30).*

*After **singing a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26).*

*But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns of praise** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them (Acts 16:25).*

*saying, "I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will **sing** Your **praise**" (Heb. 2:12).*

The root word, *humnos* (ὑμνος), identifies "a hymn" (Thomas 5215). BDAG define it as "a song with religious content, hymn/song of praise esp. in honor of a deity" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

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

*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 (Col. 3:16).*

The Verb Adō

The Greek word *adō* (ᾄδω), derived from *aeidō* (to sing), also means "to sing" (Thomas 103). BDAG define it as "sing (in praise)." Occurring 5x in the NT and is always translated "singing" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) or "sang" (Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3).

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

*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 (Col. 3:16)*

*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 (Rev. 5:9)*

*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 (Rev. 14:3)*

*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!" (Rev. 15:3)*

The Verb Psallō

The Greek word *psallō* (ψάλλω), derived from *psaō* (to rub), means "to pull, twitch, twang, play, sing" [5567]. It occurs 4x in the NT and is translated "sing" (Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; James 5:13) or "make melody" (Eph. 5:19).

*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" (Rom. 15:9).*

*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 (1 Cor. 14:15).*

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

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

Consider BDAG's definition of psallō: ψάλλω in our literature, in accordance with OT usage, to sing songs of praise, with or without instrumental accompaniment, *sing, sing praise...* (Eph. 5:19; Rom. 15:9).

The original meaning of ψ. was 'pluck', 'play' (a stringed instrument); this persisted at least to the time of Lucian (cp. Par. 17).

In the LXX ψ. frequently means 'sing', whether to the accompaniment of an instrument (Ps 32:2, 97:5 al.) or not, as is usually the case (Ps. 7:18; 9:12; 107:4; al.).

This focus on singing continued until ψ. in Mod. Gk. means 'sing' exclusively; cp. 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 understood in this Ephesian passage.

Those who favor 'play' may be relying too much on the earliest meaning of ψάλλω.

Conclusion

It is essential that we have Bible authority for everything that we do or practice (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11). Which New Testament passage justifies the use of instrumental music? There is none! We must learn not to "go beyond" [ASV] or "exceed" [NASB95] the things that are written (1 Cor. 4:6). Christians are commanded to sing, and the instrument we worship God with is the heart! Paul said, "Make melody in your heart to the Lord."

Colossians 3:17 ... 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.

1 Peter 4:11 ... 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 4:6 ... 6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

ⁱ For additional information on this point, refer to "The Silence of God: Permissive or Prohibitive," Sermon #1487, SILENCE.DOC.

ⁱⁱ This Hebrew word SEH (H7716) refers to either a young sheep or goat. Strong says this word describes "a member of a flock," which can include either cattle, ewe, goat, lamb, sheep, etc. Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament indicates the same thing. See EXO.DOC for more information.

ⁱⁱⁱ This interpretation is supported by the KJV, ASV, RSV, NASB, NIV, etc. However, the NKJV says "I heard the sound of harpist playing their harps."