

# **REASONS GIVEN FOR THE USE OF INSTRUMENTS IN CORPORATE WORSHIP**

**I. They were used in the Old Testament, and there is nothing in the New Testament that prohibits our continuing to use them.**

**ANSWER:** Some teachings of the Old Testament are continued in the New Testament, however, many were not. Among things not continued in the New Testament are: burning incense, burning candles, ceremonial cleansing by washing in water, dancing as worship, the Sabbath, dietary laws, a priestly caste separate from the body of believers, numerous types of sacrifice, prescribed fasting and holy days, etc. As a general rule, when specific directives are given, it is not necessary to do an exhaustive list of things that are not included. When we are told to have bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper, it is not necessary to list all the foods not to be included.

**2. There is really no instruction or command about singing in worship, therefore, we are left free to make our own decisions.**

**ANSWER:** There are, in fact, two specific commands related to singing in the corporate worship. They are Eph. 5:18-20 and Col. 3: 15-17. Kittel/Friedrich state, "the word HYMNOS occurs only in Col. 3: 16, Eph. 5: 19. The Word of Christ is alive in the community in teaching and admonition and in the singing of songs for God, i.e. in these the community praises God from the heart on account of the salvation which He has given by what He has done in Christ." To those who have claimed these passages relate to individual and not congregational singing, note their added footnote: "LOH. KOL on 3:16 is mistaken in relating EN HUMIN to individuals. EN HUMIN "among you" in the community etc. is common in Paul. Of 18 instances in 1 Cor., 13 plainly have this sense (1:10f, 2:2, 3:3, 18, 5:1, 6:5, 11:18f, 30, 14:25, 15:12, and it is implied in 3:16, 6: 19, on the basis of 14:15. In 6:2 the meaning is certainly not "within you," nor "for yourself" in 11:13." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VIII, p. 498).

**3. The Greek word PSALLO (sing...Rom. 15:9, 1 Cor. 14:15, Eph. 5:19, and Jas. 5:3) first meant "to touch," then later "to pluck," and then to "play a stringed instrument." Therefore, the presence of an instrument is included in the meaning of the word.**

**ANSWER:** If that were true, either the Apostles did not understand the meaning of the term, or they did understand and chose not to obey. In actuality, the meaning of PSALLO began to change by the time of the LXX in 270 BC. Gerhard Dellinger stated, "Hence one must take into account a shift of meaning (for PSALLO) in the LXX in other passages in which the idea of playing is not evident (Hymnos, TDNT, Vol. VIII, p. 494, quoted in Jividen, J., Worship in Song, p. 11). Boles wrote, "While PSALLO originally meant to "pluck with the fingers" as on a harp, by the first century the word usually meant "to sing" and did not necessarily imply the use of mechanical instruments" (NIV Commentary — Galatians & Ephesians, College Press, 1996, p. 309). Kittel/Friedrich commenting on the meaning of PSALLO in Eph. 5:19 state, "The literal sense "by or with the playing of strings," still found in the LXX, is now employed figuratively" (Kittel/Friedrich, Op.Cit., p. 499)

**4. Instrumental music is only an aid to singing much as a song book or a loud speaker would be, and not the adding of something to what God has commanded in worship.**

**ANSWER:** Neither the song book nor the amplification system represent something in addition to singing. There are only two kinds of music, vocal and instrumental. Only one of these is set forth in the New Testament. The instrument is a different kind of music and essentially an addition to the directive we have in Scripture. Music experts have repeatedly noted the superiority of the human voice, and the unique quality of a-cappella singing. The congregation in song demonstrates the wonder of God's plan for the church where each member makes his or her contribution to the total. It can be stated that instruments are more of a hindrance than an aid to singing. Churches become dependent upon the instrument, members often never learn to sing, and the instrument becomes a part of the worship all on its own. Singing essentially exists to "praise God, to admonish the brethren, and to express personal religious feelings." None of these can be done by an instrument (Jividen, Op.Cit., E. 77).

**5. Since instruments are going to be in heaven, we can surely use them in the church!**

ANSWER: The verses in question are found in Revelation 5:8-9, 14:3, and 15:3. None of these have anything to do with the church or its worship. What is depicted is the life beyond this life and the activities of the saved in heaven. Revelation is apocalyptic literature where truths are veiled in symbolism and figures of speech. We read of animals, gold streets, bowls of incense, and many other things not to be taken literally.

**6. This is just not an issue with me, and I don't believe it is one with God either.**

**ANSWER:** You can know whether or not it is an issue with you, but you cannot know if it is or is not an issue with God until judgment. Sometimes what man has considered to be a little thing, has proved to be a big thing with God (Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10:1-3, 12:11-13, Uzzah, 2 Sam. 6:1-11, 1 Chron. 15:2,11-15, Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5: 1-11). Paul asked who has been God's counselor (Rom. 11:34). Before getting too far out on a limb about knowing how God thinks, it would be good to ponder Isa. 55:8-9, and Psl. 50:21. What we do know is that God sees a relationship between our love for Him and our obedience (John 14:23-24).

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