

Mechanical Instruments of Music In Worship...

Eph. 5:15-21

Introduction

- The specific subject of our study addresses the question of whether or not we should use mechanical instruments of music in our worship. Many would answer affirmatively and offer various arguments in their defense...what does God's word say?
 - Topic that touches on not only that particular question, but also broader matters such as our respect for Jesus Christ as Lord and King -- his authority as expressed in the Bible, the word of God; worship as to what it is, to whom it is directed, and whether or not God really cares how we express our honor and homage to him.
 - As we approach the subject from these angles it behooves us to be familiar with and ready to give an answer for what we believe and practice.

Introduction

- When we look at the N. T. Scriptures it is evident that when the early church assembled to worship God
 - They partook of the Lord's Supper, (1st day of week)
 - They prayed,
 - They received teaching from God's word.
 - They gave of their means, (1st day of week)
 - And they sang together, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
 - **Not because they took a vote and these things came out on top, just seemed like a good idea, that is the manner in which their parents had worshipped, or this is what everybody else was doing...**
 - But this is what they were taught by the apostles of Jesus Christ.

What The Apostles Taught The Early Church...

- John 16:13 → Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, ***he will guide you into all truth:*** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
- Matt. 28:20 → ***Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:*** and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
- Act 2:42 → ***And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine*** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
- Eph. 3:3-5 → 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words, 4 ***Whereby, when ye read,*** ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

The Word of God -- Our Standard Today

- The Bible...God's will for us...
 - Beyond which we cannot go. (II Jn. 9)
 - Short of which we cannot fall. (Js. 4:17)
 - For which we cannot substitute. (Gal. 1:6-9)
 - Upon the silence of which we cannot presume. (Heb. 7:14)
 - ...And be pleasing to him.
- As we look at the pages of the New Testament, we find no hint of the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, or any teaching that would permit us to do so today.

A Look At the Biblical Text...

- Eph. 5:17-19 → Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
- Col. 3:16-17 → 16 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. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (cf. Matt. 26:20; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 14:15; Heb. 2:12; Js. 5:13)
 - Look at all the information – no references to instrumental music in worship – singing and playing or just worshipping by playing...

Some Objections Considered...

- Maybe they just didn't have mechanical instruments of music back then in that culture...
 - Mechanical Instruments go back as far as Gen. 4:21
 - Instruments were prominent in the pagan worship of the First Century Greco Roman world:
 - *the lyre and the kithara were said to evoke reason and were linked to the worship of Apollo, the god of reason. Similarly, a double-reed instrument known as the aulos was said to evoke passion and was linked to the worship of Dionysus, the god of ecstasy. (Concise Oxford History of Music)*



Some Objections Considered...

- **Mechanical Instruments were used in O.T. worship.**
 - We are not under that law. It was given to the Jews and nailed to the cross when Jesus died. (Jer. 31:31ff; Col. 2:14-17; Rom. 7:1-3)
 - Why were they used in worship in the O.T. ?
 - None in the original tabernacle constructed in the wilderness. (Ex. 25:9, 40; Lev. 10:1-3, etc.) **PATTERN**
 - I Chron. 16:4-5 → 4 And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel: 5 Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obedom: and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals;

Some Objections Considered...

- ***1 Chron. 28:11-13,19*** → 11 Then David gave to Solomon his son ***the pattern*** of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, 12 And ***the pattern*** of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: 13 Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD. ... 19 All this, said David, ***the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.***

Some Objections Considered...

- II Chron. 29:25 → 25 And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for **so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets.**
 - Why were there musical instruments in O.T. worship? Because God said that He wanted them!
 - Why did David provide for instrumental music? Because God told him to!
 - Why had the generation before David not used instrumental music? God had not told them to!
 - Why did David instruct the specific instruments that he did? Because God commanded him!
 - Why were the Levites the ones who were to play these instruments? That is what God had said!

Some Objections Considered...

- What about the Greek word “ψάλλω”? The word from which “making melody” is translated in Eph. 5:19. Doesn’t that mean to play a mechanical instrument?
 - If so, “playing” would not be an option, it would be a command.
 - “Psallo” – a word whose meaning changed over the centuries. By the time of the New Testament it had come to mean “in the NT to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song” (Thayer)

How Psalms Is Translated...

- **NET** [©](#) speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord,
- **NIV** [©](#) Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,
- **NASB** [©](#) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
- **ESV** [©](#) addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,
- **NLT** [©](#) singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.

How Psallo Is Translated...

- **MSG**© Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ.
- **BBE**© Joining with one another in holy songs of praise and of the Spirit, using your voice in songs and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
- **NKJV**© speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
- **NRSV**© as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,
- **KJV**© Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(CEB\)**](#) speak to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; sing and make music to the Lord in your hearts;
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(CJB\)**](#) sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to each other; sing to the Lord and make music in your heart to him;
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(CSB\)**](#) speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music to the Lord in your heart,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(DBY\)**](#) speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting with your heart to the Lord;
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(GNT\)**](#) Speak to one another with the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts.

- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(GW\)**](#) by reciting psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs for your own good. Sing and make music to the Lord with your hearts.
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(HNV\)**](#) speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; singing, and singing praises in your heart to the Lord;
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(JUB\)**](#) speaking among yourselves with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and praising the Lord in your hearts,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(LEB\)**](#) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and singing praise in your heart to the Lord,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(NCV\)**](#) Speak to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord.
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(NIRV\)**](#) Speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.

- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(NRS\)**](#) as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(RHE\)**](#) Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord:
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(RSV\)**](#) addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(SBLG\)**](#) λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(TMB\)**](#) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(TYN\)**](#) speakynge vnto youre selves in psalmes and ymnes and spretuall songes synginge and makeinge melodie to ye Lorde in youre hertes
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WBT\)**](#) Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WEB\)**](#) speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; singing, and singing praises in your heart to the Lord;
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WNT\)**](#) but drink deeply of God's Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and offer praise in your hearts to the Lord.
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WYC\)**](#) and speak ye to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and saying psalm in your hearts to the Lord; [speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and saying psalm in your heart to the Lord;]
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(YLT\)**](#) speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WBT\)**](#) Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WEB\)**](#) speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; singing, and singing praises in your heart to the Lord;
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WNT\)**](#) but drink deeply of God's Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and offer praise in your hearts to the Lord.
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(WYC\)**](#) and speak ye to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and saying psalm in your hearts to the Lord; [speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and saying psalm in your heart to the Lord;]
- [**Ephesians 5:19 \(YLT\)**](#) speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Historical Background Of Instrumental Music In Churches...

- 1st century practice in worship and for several centuries was singing to God in worship.
- Instrumental music was introduced 100's of years later.
- Some quotes from the “Church Fathers”, as it was an issue that appeared in their day. Those influenced by pagan practice seeking to bring it into worship.

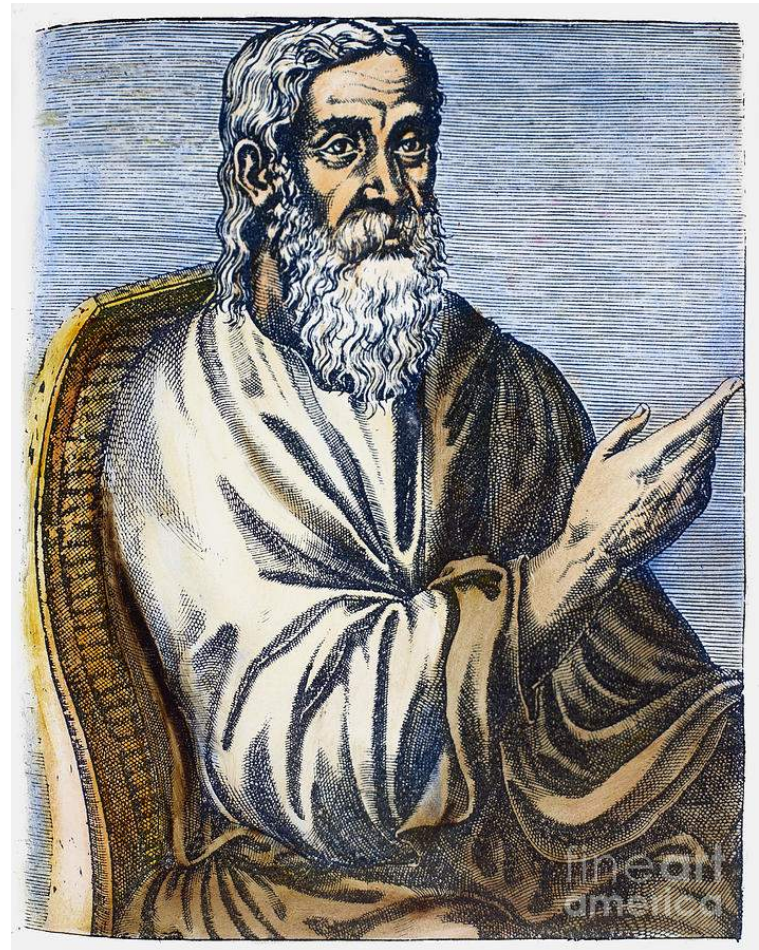
Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.)

- “The use of music was not received in the Christian churches, as it was among the Jew, in their infant state, but only the use of plain song.” (Martyr)



Clement of Alexandria (150-215)

- "Leave the pipe to the shepherd, the flute to the men who are in fear of gods and intent on their idol worshipping. Such musical instruments must be excluded ..." "But as for us, we make use of one instrument alone: only the Word of peace, by whom we pay homage to God, no longer with ancient harp or trumpet or drum or flute..."



Arnobius of Sicca (390 A.D.)

- "To what purpose is the rattling of castanets: the deities might hear them, have respect for their performance, and forget their burning anger?... Are the almighty deities soothed by the shrill sound of pipes, and do they relax at the rhythm of symbols, their indignation mollified?"



When Were Mechanical Instruments of Music First Introduced Into Worship?

- The first recorded example of a musical instrument in worship was an organ introduced in about 670 A. D. in a Roman Catholic Church in Rome by Pope Vitalianus.
- The second occasion of instruments being used in worship occurred in 812, when Pepin's son, Charlemagne, had a copy of this organ made for the Roman Catholic Cathedral in France.
- This introduction was not without opposition.

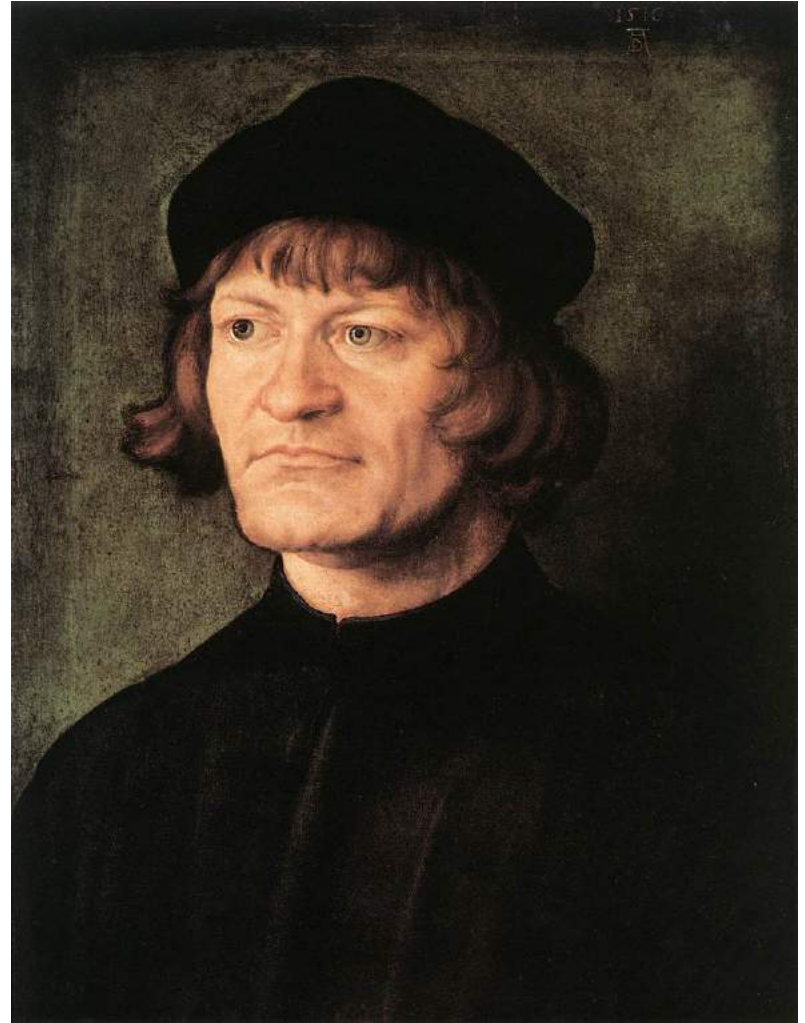
Introduction Was Not Without Opposition...

- Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
→ "The Church does not use musical instruments such as the harp or lyre when praising God, in case she should seem to fall back into Judaism ... for musical instruments usually muse the soul more to pleasure than create inner moral goodness.



Introduction Was Not Without Opposition...

- Huldreich Zwingli (1481-1531)
→ “Music, choral or instrumental, no matter how religiously inspired, artistically beautiful, or superlatively perform, must be prohibited from worship because Scripture has made its existence there impossible.



Introduction Was Not Without Opposition...

- John Calvin (1509-1564) To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery unquestionably formed part of the training of the law, and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving. We are not, indeed, forbidden to use, in private, musical instruments, but they are banished out of the churches by the plain command of the Holy Spirit...



Introduction Was Not Without Opposition...

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) “What a noble instrument the human voice is! . . . Had I no conscientious objection to instrumental music in worship, I should still, I think, be compelled to admit that all the instruments that were ever devised by men, however sweetly attuned, are harsh and grating compared with the unparalleled sweetness of the human voice . . . there can be no music under heaven that can equal the combination of voices which belong to men, women, and children whose hearts really love the Savior. . . .

If you want the sensual gratification of music’s melting, mystic lay, let me commend to you the concert-room, there you will get the enchanting ravishment; but when you come to the house of God, let it be to ‘sing unto the Lord.’”



Introduction Was Not Without Opposition...

Erasmus (1466-1536) “Modern church music is so constructed that the congregation cannot hear one distinct word. The choristers themselves do not understand what they are singing, yet according to priests and monks it constitutes the whole of religion. Why will they not listen to Paul? In college or monastery it is still the same: music, nothing but music. There was no music in St. Paul’s time.” “We have introduced into churches a type of laborious and theatrical music, a confused chattering of diverse voices such as I do not think was ever heard in the theatres of the Greeks or the Romans.



They perform everything with slide-trumpets, trombones, cornetts, and little flutes, and with these the voices of men contend. Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled.”

The Modern Trend...

- “On a weekend night, Tracy Carkeet heads to a local spot where the band is known to kick out AC/DC and Journey covers. Before glow sticks were passed around, Carkeet, 27, joined the crowd, swaying to the electric sound. On nights nights when the fog machine is going full throttle, the scene is like a rock concert, but this is no grungy music, this is church...accessible Christian message.

What Is Wrong With Instrumental Music In Worship?

- God has not authorized it in His word...
 - II Jn. 9 → those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ have not God.
 - I Pet. 4:11 → we must speak as the oracles of God.
 - Jn. 4:24 → worship God in spirit and in truth.
 - God has specified the kind of music we are to offer in worship. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) Reflected in the practice of the early church.
- It is a corrupting of worship.
 - Worship is not a performance art.
 - Worship is not theater.
 - Worship is not directed to the worshipper for the purpose of entertainment, but to the Creator in praise and honor of him, as we teach and admonish one another.