

## **Instrumental Music In Worship**

### **Notes from Bible class presented several years ago.**

When many first hear there are some churches that do not use instrumental music in their service, they often think it is a little strange.

Instrumental music is so prevalent among modern churches that the vast majority have probably never experienced religious services without it.

Although its use is widespread, most don't realize when or how it became accepted among the various religious groups.

Historically, instrumental music did not become a common practice in Roman Catholicism until the Middle Ages, and it was not accepted by the Protestants until the mid to late 1800's.

The Bible does not give any explicit commands for Christians concerning the use of instruments of music. There is no passage that plainly says, "Thou shalt use instrumental music in worship" or, "Thou shalt not use instrumental music in worship."

Since instruments in worship are neither openly commanded nor condemned, does it make any difference whether we use them or not?

**THE REAL ISSUE IS NOT THE INSTRUMENTS THEMSELVES, BUT OUR VIEW TOWARD THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.**

We need to be careful to respect the will of God for our lives. When God has given us freedom to choose in certain areas, we should respect everyone's freedom to express their personal judgment in those areas. When God has expressed His desired will on any subject, we must be careful to follow His will rather than our own.

We must pay close attention to the warning Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

The word "lawlessness" (iniquity - KJV) literally means, "the condition of being without law." The sin of lawlessness includes going beyond what has been delivered from God.

In 1 Kings 12:25-33, we read how Jeroboam was guilty of lawlessness when he changed the worship of Israel. This rebellion against God eventually led to the downfall of Israel.

Jeroboam established new priests, new feast days, and a new location for

worship. God did not command any of these things, but 1 Kings 12:33 tells us that Jeroboam devised these things in his own heart.

God did not specifically tell Jeroboam not to do any of these things. Instead, Jeroboam was supposed to obey what God had already commanded concerning worship. Because of Jeroboam's lawlessness, God rejected him and eventually destroyed his family.

It makes no difference whether we live under the Old or the New Covenant, we must follow God's instructions if we are to be pleasing to Him.

There is a growing tendency in churches to discount the importance of following God's will exactly as He revealed it.

Some say it doesn't really matter. They say things like, "I can take it or leave it -- it doesn't matter to me."

When people talk like this, are they really saying, "I am not that concerned about what the Bible teaches -- or Bible authority -- or God's will"?

In Matthew 21:23, the chief priests and the elders came to Jesus while He was teaching in the Temple and asked Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

Jesus did not rebuke their concern for the need of the proper authority. He recognized that these men were not interested in knowing the truth, so He answered their question with a question.

In the next two verses, Jesus replied saying, "I will ask you one thing too, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?"

Jesus understood that there were only two possible answers for the source of John's baptism. Either it came from God or it was devised in the heart of man.

Everything people do in their religious service falls under one of these two categories. Either God commanded it or authorized it, or man invented it.

The question those who use instrumental music must answer is, "By what authority are you doing these things?"

The burden is not on those who do not practice something but on those who do practice it. They are the ones who must give answer to man and God.

1. When we baptize one into Jesus, what authority do we have?
2. When we take the Lord's Supper, what authority do we have?

3. If we use instrumental music, what authority do we have?

We should be able to give book, chapter, and verse in God's Word to establish the authority for anything we are doing in our worship to God.

If no scriptural authority can be found, the practice must be given up. To do something without Biblical authority is to ignore the will of God.

Scriptural authority can easily be provided to prove it is right to baptize a person in Jesus' name and to observe the Lord's Supper.

Those who use instrumental music in worship to God must provide the passage where God told us that this is what He desires (or that He allows it).

When one studies the whole issue concerning the use of instruments of music in worship, it is clear that the central issue is one of Biblical authority. [It is not the only issue, but it is the central issue.]

How do we know whether we are authorized to do something? How do we know that something is unauthorized?

**BIBLICAL AUTHORITY WAS THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.**

In the 1500's, a religious movement known as the Protestant Reformation was begun. The goal of the Reformation movement was to reform a corrupt Roman Catholicism.

Three of the most important leaders of this movement were John Calvin, Huldreich Zwingli, and Martin Luther. They took the position that proper authority comes from God alone.

The position of Roman Catholicism was that authority comes not only from God, but also from church tradition, church laws, and the Pope.

This was the major issue of the Reformation.

There were many different religious disagreements and conflicts between Catholicism and the reformers, but the central issue was the desire of the reformers to turn to the Bible for their authority and the willingness of Catholicism to allow the Pope and church hierarchy to make rules for them to follow.

The Protestants developed two different views toward Biblical authority.

1. The view of Calvin and Zwingli.

Calvin and Zwingli took the position that "we can only do what the Bible teaches and we are not to go beyond what is written."

They expressed their position by teaching, "Only that which the Bible commands or for what distinct authorization can be found in its pages is

binding or allowable." In other words, they taught that we can do only that which the Bible authorizes us to do.

This is the Biblical position. It is not the correct position because Calvin and Zwingli taught it, but because it is the position taught by the Bible itself in both the Old and New Testaments.

"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 4:2)

"So you shall observe to do just as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left." (Deuteronomy 5:32)

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

"Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar." (Proverbs 30:5-6)

"But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8-9)

"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11)

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:17)

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

In 1524, images, relics and instrumental music were removed from the Reformed churches of Germany because they said there was no authority for them in God's Word.

Singing without instrumental music was the practice of ALL the churches in the Reformation movement with the exception of the Church of England.

## 2. The view of Martin Luther.

Martin Luther had another view toward Bible authority. He believed that "whatever is not forbidden in the Bible is permissible."

His position could be summed up by, "If the Bible doesn't say you can't, then you can. There is nothing wrong with a practice as long as the Bible does not say you can't."

One of the reasons Luther took this position was that he also believed in infant baptism. The Bible does not say you can't baptize infants, but the Bible does not authorize it either.

Nearly every denomination today follows Luther's view of authority. If you talk about instrumental music to most people today, the first response you will most likely get is, "The Bible doesn't say you can't!"

Again, how we establish Bible authority is the central issue concerning instrumental music. (It is not the only argument that can be given, but it is the central issue.)

The two views taken are that either "we can only do that which the Bible authorizes" or "we can do anything the Bible does not specifically forbid."

Which one is based on the teachings of the Bible?

If we take the position that we can do anything as long as the Bible doesn't say we can't, then on what basis can any of these things be opposed?

1. Rosary Beads as worship
2. Burning incense or using candles as worship
3. Bowing to and worshipping through statues.
4. Having a Pope, Archbishops, Cardinals
5. Hamburger and Coke for the Lord's Supper
6. Praying to Mary
7. Infant Baptism
8. Instrumental Music

The only way any of these things can be opposed Biblically is by acknowledging the fact that when the Bible tells us what God wants, that excludes everything else. This is an extremely important principle.

Concerning praying with rosary beads, incense and candles, the Bible is completely silent. To add them to our religious service as a part of worship would be adding to the Word of God.

The use of rosary beads, incense and candles are from what source, from heaven or from men?

The Bible doesn't specifically say that we are not to have church government like the Catholic hierarchy of the Pope [Archbishops and Cardinals]. The Bible does provide instructions concerning the organization of the local church under elders as shepherds and deacons as servants. If we alter the pattern of church government revealed in the Bible, we are putting our views and desires above God's will.

Although the Bible may not specifically say we can't have Archbishops and Cardinals, where does it say we can? It doesn't have to say we can or can't – it clearly reveals how God, through the inspired apostles, set up the organization of the church.

We are instructed to use unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine for the Lord's Supper. That excludes all other elements. To use hamburgers and Coke or any other substitute would be going beyond what is written, although the Bible does not say you can't use hamburgers and Coke.

The only way we can Biblically oppose the practice of praying to God through Mary is by showing how the Bible instructs us to pray through Jesus. The Bible does not say we can't pray through Mary, but it does tell us to pray through Jesus. In 1 Timothy 2:5 we are told that "there is one mediator between God and men," Jesus Christ. That excludes everyone else.

In the Scriptures, we are instructed to baptize believers who are repentant. We are never told not to baptize infants, we are simply told who we are to baptize.

If someone wanted to baptize their pet, no one could point to a passage that commands us not to baptize cats and dogs. [Don't laugh – some churches bless and baptize animals!]

The only way we could prevent Christians from getting involved in such foolishness is to teach we must practice only that for which we have authority.

This SAME PRINCIPLE applies to the use of instrumental music. The Bible does not say that we can't use instruments. God simply told us what kind of music we are to be making when He told us to be, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" and to be, "singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16)

Where does the Bible say you can't?

1. Priests were to be taken only from the tribe of Levi.

God never said Israel could not have priests from the tribe of Judah. God did tell them He wanted the priests taken from the tribe of Levi. Hebrews 7:14 tells us, "For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood."

God didn't say one from the tribe of Judah couldn't be a priest. He just said that priests were to be taken from the tribe of Levi. By giving this command, all Israelites who were not Levites were excluded from the priesthood.

## 2. The example of Nadab and Abihu.

In Leviticus 10, we are given another example that demonstrates the need of following God's commands exactly as He delivered them.

There we are told, "Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective fire pans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord." (Leviticus 10:1-2)

In the very next verse, Moses told Aaron, "It is what the Lord spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.'"

Nadab and Abihu did not treat God as holy. They were careless with His words and added to them. Nadab and Abihu were from the proper tribe (the Levites), they had authority to offer incense, they used the right incense and the right fire pan, but the wrong fire.

Just one seemingly insignificant violation brought swift destruction upon them.

No one is allowed to lift up their desires or opinions above the authority of God's Word.

Notice what God said about Himself in the Scriptures:

"I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another." (Isaiah 42:8)

"For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; for how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another." (Isaiah 48:11)

God will not share His glory with any other. Only He is the Creator, only He is the Almighty, only He is the Holy One. For man to exalt his desires above God's Word is to try to share in God's glory.

## 3. The example of Uzziah.

In the beginning of his reign, King Uzziah did right in the sight of the Lord. God blessed him because of his faithfulness and he became very successful.

Although there was much good in the life of King Uzziah, in 2 Chronicles 26:16-20, we read of King Uzziah being punished by God for offering incense in the Temple.

The Law of Moses never stated that a king could not be a priest. It never said a king could not offer incense.

The Law did state that offering incense was the job of the priest. For anyone, including the king, to go beyond that was to act without authority from God. When Uzziah became strong and proud, he acted corruptly and was unfaithful to the Lord (2 Chronicles 26:16).

How did he become corrupt and unfaithful? He did something which he was not authorized to do. He decided to play God and make up his own rules. The Bible did not say he couldn't offer incense, but he was not told that he could either.

The priests tried to warn him by saying, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful, and will have no honor from the Lord God" (2 Chronicles 26:18).

Instead of repenting of his lawlessness, Uzziah became enraged with the obvious attitude, "I am going to do it anyway!" God immediately struck him with leprosy and he remained a leper until the day of his death.

The need to follow God's instructions carefully can be illustrated from modern life.

If you went to a department store and ordered a shirt and they added a belt, a tie, and a pair of shoes and charged you for them, would you pay them?

What if you told the store manager that you didn't order these things and he replied, "You did not tell us we couldn't put these other items in also." Would you be satisfied with this reasoning?

It should be obvious that when God specifies something everything else of like nature is excluded.

When God told Noah to build the ark with "gopher" wood that excluded all other wood.

When God's Word tells us to baptize penitent believers that excludes infants.

When God's Word specifies unleavened bread and fruit of the vine for the Lord's Supper that excludes everything else.

When God's Word specifies singing, that excludes playing.

The need for obedience is also taught in the New Testament.

Although the covenants were changed by the coming of Christ, God's attitude toward those who add to or take away from His Word has not



changed.

If we try to change His Word, we are really saying that our authority is above God's.

In Mark 7, Jesus severely rebuked the scribes and Pharisees. They were worshipping God, but it was vain worship, because they were practicing that which God had not commanded.

These men asked Jesus, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" (Mark 7:5).

Notice how they were concerned about observing the tradition of the elders. They had invented a set of rules which included the need of washing hands before eating.

There is nothing wrong in washing hands before eating, but it becomes very wrong when one requires it as service to God when God has not commanded it. By doing this, man is claiming to have the authority to set up the rules.

Jesus rebuked them by saying, "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. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men'" (Mark 7:6-8).

Even as small a matter as washing hands can cause one's worship to be vain. Instead of following God's rules, they were elevating their own ideas above the Scriptures and were rejected. Their washing was being done on man's authority instead of God's.

We must live by faith to be pleasing to God. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)

To live by true faith, we must be following the Word of God. As Romans 10:17 teaches us, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

If God's Word does not teach or authorize something, it cannot be done by true Biblical faith; it can only be done by our own will. This is serious!

WHAT DOES GOD AUTHORIZES US TO DO?

1. We are to sing with the spirit.

What is the result then? "I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with

the understanding." (1 Corinthians 14:15)

Does the phrase "sing with the spirit" authorize playing instrumental music? If it does, can we pray with instruments since we are also told to "pray with the spirit"?

2. We are to make melody in our hearts.

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:19)

We are to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Instruments cannot speak or sing.

The phrase "make melody" is from the Greek word "psallo" and is to be done "in your hearts." Nothing is said about making a melody on an instrument.

a. Some claim that "psallo" means playing a stringed instrument. It could mean this during the time of classical Greek, but Paul made it plain where the melody is to be played. The only melody mentioned is the one that is to be in our heart.

b. Some have claimed that "psallo" means one must play an instrument to follow this. If so, everyone must play. This view would turn the congregation into an orchestra since everyone is commanded to make a melody. Also, if this view was correct anyone who didn't know how to play an instrument would not be able to obey this command.

c. The Greek Orthodox do NOT use instruments. This was one of the issues that caused them to divide from Roman Catholicism in 1054. Do the Greeks not understand their own language?

Everyone can make a melody in their hearts regardless of their knowledge of music. This is God's revealed desire.

If we make melody on a mechanical instrument, we are adding to what God commanded. The instrument on which we are to make melody is the HEART. [Those who do not understand this do not understand New Testament worship.]

Note: We will see later that the early Christians understood this.

We are to make melody "to the Lord." Contrary to the practice of many modern churches, worship is not an activity that we engage in to entertain ourselves or please ourselves -- it is to the Lord.

It is up to God to tell us what He wants and what is best for us. We must have the attitude of the apostle Paul when he wrote, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

3. We are to sing with grace in our hearts. "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." (Col. 3:16).

This passage reveals three specific things that God wants us to accomplish with our music. He wants us to teach, admonish, and sing with grace in our hearts.

Each one of these commands can only be followed with our voices. Instruments cannot teach, admonish nor sing with grace.

To add instrumental music to our worship to God is to add another kind of music that God has not authorized.

As long as we practice what the Bible says, there is no disagreement that we are doing what is right.

Everyone can see that the Bible teaches Christians to be "speaking to one another" and to be "making melody in your hearts." Christians are to be "teaching and admonishing one another" and to be "singing with grace in your hearts."

None of these points are debated by anyone. The disagreement comes when people try to add instrumental music to God's commands. This is where we can see that the real issue is not instrumental music, but our view toward the authority of the Word of God.

Do we strive to follow exactly what the Lord reveals, or are we free to add our own ideas to what He has revealed?

If we are serious about not adding to the Scriptures, those who use instrumental music in their worship must find a passage that authorizes their practice. Until that passage is found, the question must still be asked, "Instrumental music is from what source, from heaven or men?"

Some argue that instrumental music is an aid to our singing, not an addition to God's commands.

An aid can only be an aid as long as it does not change or add to the nature or action of what is being done. (This is an important principle to follow – if we don't Pandora's box is opened!)

One example would be the use of communion ware commonly used by churches. It does not matter if we use silver, aluminum, gold or paper plates to pass out the unleavened bread. The plates and trays are merely an aid to carry out the Lord's commands to eat and drink the bread and fruit of the vine in remembrance of Him.

When a teacher or preacher uses a microphone, it does not change the nature or action of the obedience to God's commands concerning teaching. The correct teaching can still be accomplished, although the sound volume may be aided by new technology.

Songbooks do not change the fact that we are singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. The action is still the same, although we might use an aid to enable us to better carry out the Lord's commands.

An overhead projector or power point does not change the action of preaching or teaching – they are aids in preaching or teaching.

Instrumental music is not a mere aid but an addition. The ACTION (what we are told to do) is changed. God told us how He wants us to make music. We are to "make melody with our heart". When we add instruments, instead of aiding the melody in our hearts, we are adding another melody of a different kind.

Instead of singing, we are now singing AND playing.

Note: A little later we will see that this was the overwhelming consensus of the early church.

Aids to following God's commands are not sinful, but God has always rejected additions to His commands.

What would happen if someone wanted to serve roasted lamb during the Lord's Supper to help us remember that Jesus is the true Lamb of God? Would this be an aid or an addition?

God commanded what He wants us to use to remember the sacrifice of the Lord. He commanded us to use unleavened bread, and to change from bread to lamb would be an addition to God's law rather than an aid.

Using lamb to remember Jesus being the Lamb of God might seem like a good idea to us. The Bible doesn't say we can't do this! The Bible does tell us what to use, and to use any other kind of food not authorized by God would be lawlessness, or without law.

To use instruments in worship to God, we must find the passage that authorizes it, or admit that we are practicing that for which there is no law.

Worshipping God without law is what the Bible calls lawlessness.

Some claim that since instruments were used during the Old Covenant, we can use them in worship today.

Those who want to justify the use of instrumental music today continually go to the Old Testament for their justification. Why? Because they can not find any justification or authorization in the New Testament!

Why did the Jews use instruments? Because God commanded them to be used.

In 2 Chronicles 29:25, we read how Hezekiah stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres. He did this because,

"the command was from the Lord through His prophets."

Hezekiah would have been wrong if he had not followed the Lord's commands.

Some reason that since "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), then we can worship with instruments because their use was commanded in the past.

We must understand that God the Father and Jesus do not change, but the covenants have changed!

We cannot go to the Old Covenant for our authority in worship today.

The book of Galatians was written to Christians who were trying to bind circumcision on those who would approach God. Although circumcision was required by God in the Old Covenant, to require it today is to fall from grace.

Paul wrote, "Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." (Galatians 5:2-4)

There are many other practices in the Old Covenant that we do not follow today.

We no longer have cities of refuge today, although they were commanded for the Israelites.

The church no longer practices animal sacrifices or the Levitical priesthood. We understand how all these have changed because of the change in the covenants.

Why can't we as easily see that it is just as wrong to go back to the Old Testament for our authority for instrumental music as it would be to try to justify any of these other practices in the Old Testament for the church today?

Although it is clear that the Jews used instruments, the New Testament tells us how we are to worship God today. In Hebrews 13:15, we are told, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." If we offer the fruit of our lips, we know we are doing right.

The Bible does not say, "Thou shalt not use the instrument!" just as God did not tell Nadab and Abihu which fire not to offer. God just tells us what He wants us to do.

Today, God is telling us through the New Testament that He wants us to be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And

whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:16-17). To "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" is to do all by His authority.

We must be able to prove by Scripture what we do and practice.

There is not one word said about instrumental music used in the worship of Christians. The only way we can do it is to add it on our own authority.

FACT: Instruments of music were used in the Old Covenant, but they were NOT used in the New Testament church. They were not used for centuries. WHY?

We must always be careful to do only what the Lord authorizes. The warning of Jesus still stands:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

To paraphrase the question that Jesus asked the Pharisees, "The use of instrumental music in the church is from what source, from heaven or from men?"

If from heaven, please give the passage. If from men, please do not practice lawlessness.

#### INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN HISTORY.

History is not our final authority in religion, but it helps us understand many issues that divide churches today. Although the real issue of instrumental music is our view of Biblical authority AND the nature of New Testament worship, it is good to know the history of this subject to better understand it.

The first mention of instruments being used in worship to God is in 1 Samuel 10:5.

There, Samuel told Saul, "After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying."

We know instruments were used in the time of David (1 Chronicles 15:16, 28, 16:4-5, Psalms 150, etc.). They were also used at Solomon's Temple (2 Chronicles 5:11-14), and they were used at the rebuilt Temple after the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 3:10, Nehemiah 12:31-37).

The only reason instrumental music was acceptable in worship during this time was because it was authorized by God.

"Then he [Hezekiah] stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets." (2 Chronicles 29:25)

Psalm 81:2-4) "Raise a song and strike the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lute. Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day. For this is a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob."

Yet, just because something was authorized during the Old Covenant does not mean it is authorized during the New Covenant.

If we use instruments today because they were in the Old Covenant, then we also must use incense, burnt offerings, and the Levitical priesthood. (Or is it just a matter of opinion – whatever we choose to do?)

Paul told the Christians of Galatia that if they observed one part of the Law, they were debtors to keep the whole Law (Galatians 5:3).

If we go to the Old Testament for justification for instrumental music, we are debtors to also use burnt offerings and incense in our worship. God told Israel to play their instruments during the "New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day" (Psalm 81:2-4).

If we used this passage to justify the use of instruments in the church, can we also use it to justify observing the New Moon?

The apostle Paul instructed the Colossians to, "Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day, things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

If we can see that the observance of the New Moons and other Jewish observances were shadows of the reality we have in Christ, we should be able to see that the method of worship during these observances were shadows, too.

Just as we have a better Temple, High Priest, and sacrifice, we also have better music. Israel had the melody made on mechanical instruments created by man, but our melody is made in the hearts created by God.

God told the Jews to use instruments. He told the Levites where to play, what to play and when to play.

NOTHING is said in the New Testament concerning when instruments are to be played, who is to do it or what is to be played.

To do so in the church is to act without authority. This is lawlessness.

Instrumental music was part of the Old Law that was taken away at the

cross, along with the Levitical Priesthood, incense, burnt offerings, tithes and the Sabbath.

It has nothing to do with the New Covenant instituted by Jesus Christ.

The failure to see the distinction of the Old Testament from the New Testament is the source of much confusion and division today.

Nothing is said about instruments at all in New Testament worship. We are given the authority to sing, but not to use instruments.

Instruments are mentioned in the New Testament, but they are never connected with worship by Christians.

FACT: Instrumental music was not used in the first century church. WHY?

The writings of the early Christians make it plain that they believed instrumental music was a shadow that was done away in the passing of the Old Law.

Instruments were readily available and were used by all of the pagan religions. If the Christians wanted to incorporate them into their worship, they could have done so very easily.

Although the writings of the early Christians are not our final authority, they do illustrate the practice of the early church which was founded by the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised the apostles, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Did that happen? Did the apostles have "ALL truth"?

Around 190 AD, Clement of Alexandria wrote of the need of Christians not to use instrumental music:

"Leave the pipe to the shepherd, the flute to the men who are in fear of gods and are intent on their idol-worshipping. Such musical instruments must be excluded from our wineless feasts, for they are more suited for beasts and for the class of men that is least capable of reason than for men...In general, we must completely eliminate every such base sight or sound -- in a word, everything immodest that strikes the senses (for this is an abuse of the senses) -- if we would avoid pleasures that merely fascinate the eye or ear, and emasculate." [Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor, The Fathers of the Church*, Catholic University of America Press: Washington, 1954, pg. 130.]

About 200 years after Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom wrote that the churches had not yet introduced instruments into their services:

"David formerly sang songs, also today we sing hymns. He had a lyre with lifeless strings, the church has a lyre with living strings. Our tongues are the strings of the lyre with a different tone indeed but much more in



accordance with piety. Here there is no need for the cithara, or for stretched strings, or for the plectrum, or for art, or for any instrument; but, if you like, you may yourself become a cithara, mortifying the members of the flesh and making a full harmony of mind and body. For when the flesh no longer lusts against the Spirit, but has submitted to its orders and has been led at length into the best and most admirable path, then will you create a spiritual melody." [John Crysostom, Exposition of Psalms 41, (381-398 A. D.) Source Readings in Music History, ed. O. Strunk, W. W. Norton and Co.: New York, 1950, pg. 70.]

Eusebius of Caesarea was a church historian at the beginning of the fourth century. In his commentary on Psalms 91:2-3, he wrote the following concerning instrumental music:

"Of old at the time those of the circumcision were worshipping with symbols and types it was not inappropriate to send up hymns to God with the psalterion and cithara and to do this on Sabbath days....We render our hymn with a living psalterion and a living cithara with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms."

Niceta, a bishop of Remesian (Yugoslavia) also wrote the following concerning instrumental music:

"It is time to turn to the New Testament to confirm what is said in the Old, and, particularly, to point out that the office of psalmody is not to be considered abolished merely because many other observances of the Old Law have fallen into disuse. Only the corporal institutions have been rejected, like circumcision, the Sabbath, sacrifices, discrimination of foods. So, too, the trumpets, harps, cymbals, and timbrels. For the sound of these we now have a better substitute in the music from the mouths of men. The daily ablutions, the new-moon observances, the careful inspection of leprosy are completely past and gone, along with whatever else was necessary only for a time -- as it were, for children."

Theodoret, a bishop of Cyrhus in Syria, wrote a work called "Questions and Answers for the Orthodox." Instrumental music was one of the many subjects covered in this work:

"107. Question: If songs were invented by unbelievers to seduce men, but were allowed to those under the law on account of their childish state, why do those who have received the perfect teaching of grace in their churches still use songs, just like the children under the law? Answer: It is not simple singing that belongs to the childish state, but singing with lifeless instruments, with dancing, and with clappers. Hence the use of such instruments and the others that belong to the childish state is excluded from the singing in the churches, and simple singing is left."

In view of this, how can one account for the absence of such use in the churches of the New Testament period, and even the several immediately

succeeding centuries?

Did they not have access to the same information which is urged by contemporaries in attempting to justify such use?

Why did these students of Scripture in the first and immediately succeeding centuries fail to understand the propriety of, and consequently put into practice, the use of instrumental music in worship as is alleged now to be warranted by the same materials which were open to them?

#### THE INTRODUCTION OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHURCHES.

If instrumental music was not part of early Christian worship, when did it become acceptable?

Several reference works will help us see the progression of this practice among churches:

"Pope Vitalian introduced an organ in the church in the seventh century to aid the singing but it was opposed and was removed." [James Hasting, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.]

"The first organ certainly known to exist and be used in a church was put in the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle by the German Emperor Charlemagne, who came to the throne in 768. It met with great opposition among the Romanists, especially among the monks, and it made its way but slowly into common use. So great was the opposition even as late as the sixteenth century that it probably would have been abolished by the council of Trent but for the influence of the emperor Ferdinand... In the Greek Church the organ never came into use... The Reform church discarded it; and though the church of Basel very early introduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation." [Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Vol. II, pg. 1702.]

The Council of Trent met in 1545. This indicates that the introduction of instrumental music was one of the latter inventions of the Roman Catholic Church.

Even among the Roman Catholics, around 800 years passed before the instruments were widely accepted.

"The general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the 5th or 6th centuries; yea, even Gregory the Great, who towards the end of the 6th century added greatly to the existing Church music, absolutely prohibited the use of instruments... Sir John Hawkins, following the Romanish writers in his erudite work on the history of music, made Pope Vitalian, in A. D. 660, the first who introduced organs into the churches. But students of ecclesiastical archaeology are generally agreed that instrumental music was not used in churches till a much later date; for Thomas Aquinas [Catholic Scholar in 1250 A. D.] has these remarkable words, 'Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God

withal, that she may seem not to Judaize." [McClintock and Strong, Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. 6, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1894, pg. 762.]

"Although Josephus tells of the wonderful effects produced in the Temple by the use of instruments, the first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice. Clement of Alexandria severely condemns the use of instruments even at Christian banquets. St. Chrysostum sharply contrasts the customs of the Christians when they had full freedom with those of the Jews of the Old Testament." [Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pg. 652.]

"For almost a thousand years Gregorian chant, without any instrumental or harmonic addition was the only music used in connection with the liturgy. The organ, in its primitive and rude form, was the first, and for a long time the sole, instrument used to accompany the chant." [Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pg. 657.]

"The use of organs in churches is ascribed to Pope Vitalian" (657-672).

"Constantine Copronymos sent an organ with other presents to King Pepin of France in 767. Charlemagne received one as a present from the Caliph Haroun al Rashid, and had it put up in the cathedral of Aixia-Chapelle... The attitude of the churches toward the organ varies. It shared, to some extent, the fate of images, except that it never was an object of worship...The Greek church disapproved the use of organs. The Latin church introduced it pretty generally, but not without the protest of eminent men, so that even in the Council of Trent a motion was made, though not carried, to prohibit the organ at least in the mass." [Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 4, pg. 439.]

Instruments were not used extensively until the 13th and 14th centuries. In many cases they were used only as a prelude to the singing but not with the singing itself.

Notice what the Catholics themselves write concerning their introduction of instrumental music:

"We need not shrink from admitting that candles, like incense and lustral water, were commonly employed in pagan worship and the rites paid to the dead. But the Church, from a very early period, took them into her service, just as she adopted many other things indifferent in themselves, which seemed proper to enhance the splendor of religious ceremony. We must not forget that most of these adjuncts to worship, like music, lights, perfumes, ablutions, floral decorations, canopies, fans, screens, bells, vestments, etc. were not identified with any idolatrous cult in particular but they were common to almost all cults." [Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. III, pg. 246.]

**A HISTORY OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.**

The Reformation in the 16th century raised a great debate over authority. Does it come from the church, tradition along with God, or God alone?

The Reformers said authority comes from God through the Bible alone. In June or July of 1524, images, relics and organs were removed from the Reformed churches.

All of the Protestant churches that grew out of the Reformation rejected instrumental music as being "Popish" or "Romish" and unscriptural.

The Church of England was the only Protestant church that continued using it in the beginning. When their leaders met to make a decision on this issue, 59 voted to use instruments and 58 voted against their use.

Notice what some of the leaders of this movement said concerning instrumental music:

"Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps and the restoration of other shadows of the Law. The Papists therefore have foolishly borrowed this as well as many other things from the Jews. Men who are fond of outright pomp may delight in the noise, but the simplicity which God commands to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to Him." [John Calvin, Commentary on Psalms 23.]

"The organ in the worship is an insignia of Baal." [Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran Church.]

"Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music is not so." [Joseph Bingham, Church of England.]

"I have no objection to the organs in our chapels, as long as they are neither seen nor heard." [John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church.]

"The great congregation which is blessed with the privilege of listening to His instruction has no organ 'to assist' them in singing their praises to their God and Savior. They find their vocal organs sufficient. Their tongues and voices express the gratitude of their hearts... I would just as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery." [Charles Spurgeon (Baptist),

Instrumental Music In the Public Worship of the Church, p. 176.]

"David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, bellows, and pipes. We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it... 'Praise the Lord with harp.' Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days when Jesus gives us spiritual food, one can make melody without strings

and pipes...We do not need them. That would hinder rather than help our praise. Sing unto him. This is the sweetest and best music. No instrument is like the human voice." [Charles Spurgeon (Baptist), Commentary on Psalm 42.]

"In my earliest intercourse among this people, congregational singing generally prevailed among them... This instrument, [the organ] which from time immemorial has been associated with cathedral pomp and prelatical power, and has always been the peculiar favorite of great national churches, at length found its way into Baptist sanctuaries, and the first one ever employed by the denomination in this country, and probably in any other, might have been standing in the singing gallery of the Old Baptist meeting house in Pawtucket, about forty years ago, when I then officiated as pastor (1840)... Staunch old Baptists in former times would as soon tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries, and yet the instrument has gradually found its way among them... How far this modern organ fever will extend among our peoples and whether it will on the whole work a RE-formation or DE-formation in their singing service, time will more fully develop." [Benedict, (Baptist Historian), Fifty Years Among Baptists, pp. 204-207.]

"But were it even evident, which it is not, either from this or any other place in the sacred writings, that instruments of music were prescribed by divine authority under the law, could this be adduced with any semblance of reason, that they ought to be used in Christian worship? No; the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion are against this; and those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and that where they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires His followers to worship Him in spirit and truth, for to no such worship are these instruments friendly." [Adam Clarke (Methodist), Clarke's Commentary, Vol. II, pp. 690-691.]

"I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, AS A SCIENCE, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God, I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity. The late and venerable and most eminent divine, the Rev. John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an elegant poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of the Methodists, said in his terse and powerful manner, 'I have no objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.' I say the same." [Adam Clarke (Methodist), Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 684.]

"Question 6. Is there any authority for instrumental music in the worship of God under the present dispensation? Answer. Not the least, only the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs was appointed by the

apostles; not a syllable is said in the New Testament in favor of instrumental music nor was it ever introduced into the Church until after the eighth century, after the Catholics had corrupted the simplicity of the gospel by their carnal inventions. It was not allowed in the Synagogues, the parish churches of the Jews, but was confined to the Temple service and was abolished with the rites of that dispensation." [Questions on the Confession of Faith and Form of Government of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publications, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1842, pg. 55.]

Instrumental music was not generally introduced in the Protestant churches until the 1800's. It was not introduced in the Presbyterian church until 1864. In 1860, the Free Methodists banned it. When it was introduced in denominations, it consistently caused division and conflict because it was not part of New Testament worship.

#### INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT.

After the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, many kept studying and looking for what was authorized by Scripture. The result led to what some call the "Restoration Movement."

Those in this movement shared the goal of rejecting all man-made doctrines and simply being Christians.

Alexander and Thomas Campbell and Barton W. Stone, who had a Presbyterian background, were influential leaders in this movement.

They accepted the same view toward Biblical authority as Zwingli and Calvin.

Their goal was to follow God's commands completely without adding to or taking away from the Scriptures in any area.

The result of this view towards Biblical authority caused them to reject the use of instruments in worship.

Four Principles accepted within the Restoration Movement.

1. The acknowledgment of the New Testament Scriptures as the only authority for rule and faith and practice among Christians.
2. Renunciation of all human creeds and acceptance of the commands and examples of Jesus as the only creed binding upon Christians.
3. The restoration of the apostolic or New Testament concept of the church in the minds of men. We must conform our worship and our lives after the divine pattern that is revealed in the Bible.
4. The union of all Christians on the basis of only the Bible.

The attitude of the men involved in the Restoration Movement toward

instrumental music can be seen in their writings:

"[Instrumental music in worship] was well adapted to churches founded on the Jewish pattern of things and practicing infant sprinkling. That all persons singing who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for spiritual meditation, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts should call for such an aid is but natural. So to those who have no real devotion and spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the opposition or the oppression of church service I think that instrumental music would...be an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, that to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aid would be as a cow bell in a concert."  
[Alexander Campbell, recorded in Robert Richardson's biography, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, Vol. 2.]

"We cannot, therefore, by any possibility, know that a certain element of worship is acceptable to God in the Christian dispensation, when the Scriptures which speak of that dispensation are silent in reference to it. To introduce any such element is unscriptural and presumptuous. It is will worship, if any such thing as will worship can exist. On this ground we condemn the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, the wearing of priestly robes, and the reading of printed prayers. On the same ground we condemn instrumental music." [J.W. McGarvey, *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1864, pp. 511-513.]

"Neither he [Paul] nor any other apostle, nor the Lord Jesus, nor any of the disciples for five hundred years, used instruments. This too, in the face of the fact that the Jews had used instruments in the days of their prosperity and that the Greeks and heathen nations all used them in their worship. They were dropped out with such emphasis that they were not taken up till the middle of the Dark Ages, and came in as part of the order of the Roman Catholic Church. It seems there cannot be doubt but that the use of instrumental music in connection with the worship of God, whether used as a part of the worship or as an attraction accompaniment, is unauthorized by God and violates the oft-repeated prohibition to add nothing to, take nothing from, the commandments of the Lord. It destroys the difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and unholy, counts the blood of the Son of God unclean, and tramples under foot the authority of the Son of God. They have not been authorized by God or sanctified with the blood of his Son." [David Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*.]

For 50 years the Restoration movement remained united. Beginning with two congregations of less than 100, in 50 years, it grew to over 500,000. It grew to become the fourth largest religious group in the United States.

The unity was shattered between 1860-1900 by two issues, missionary societies and instrumental music.

The heart of both issues concerned differences in views toward authority. With both issues, some were saying, "The Bible doesn't say you can't!" while others were trying to be faithful to what the Bible taught.

The first time instrumental music was used among the Restoration movement was in 1860. The church in Midway, KY began using a melodeon in its worship.

Their preacher, L. L. Pinkerton, said that the singing was so bad that it would scare the rats out of the church building and the melodeon was needed to help their singing.

This was the same time period instruments were beginning to be introduced among the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists and other denominations (the same was happening with the missionary societies).

Christians failed to learn from the example given of the Jews when they wanted to be like others about them. "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations." (1 Samuel 8:5)

The men of Israel began to look at the other nations for guidance concerning their nation, rather than the Word of God. Rather than seeking the will of God, they began to seek their own will.

The next few verses reveal what the true problem was. They were not submissive to their God.

"But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them'." (1 Samuel 8:6-7)

In the same manner, God's people wanted to be like the other religious groups about them. Instead of examining the revealed will of God in the Scriptures, they turned to the denominations for guidance in what they desired.

At first, there was controversy among the churches, and then division. Those opposed to the instruments believed it was not authorized. Others were going to have it anyway. Many had to leave congregations they helped to build for conscience' sake.

J. W. Harding, father of James Harding (Harding School was named after him), was a preacher and elder at the Court Street Church of Christ in Winchester, KY for twenty years. He helped establish this congregation in 1887.

He and fifteen others were driven off by those wanting to bring in the organ. A delegation was sent to Harding with the following ultimatum: "We love you, Brother Harding, and you know that we do. But if it must come to a choice between you and the organ, we will have the organ."

This expresses the attitude even today. When it comes to a choice between what God authorizes in the Scriptures and the organ, many are



saying, "We will have the organ."

A story told by Mrs. Louise Canby Hockaday, who was a young woman when instruments caused division at the 17th and Olive Church, also reveals the attitudes among some who claimed to be disciples of Jesus:

"By a majority of more than two to one, the church that met in the chapel of Thorpe Spring Christian College found its members bitterly opposed to the adoption of the organ in the fall of 1895. When members came to services on a Saturday night to hear W. M. Davis, minister of the First Christian Church in Dallas who was to begin an evangelistic effort, they found the instrument inside waiting to be used. When services were ready to begin, a Miss Bertha Mason took her seat to play. A. J. Clark led a fervent prayer. He followed this by reading a document which he had prepared. The lights proved too dim for his old eyes, so he asked Pleas Taylor to complete the reading. It was a petition signed by 230 members of the congregation, asking the instrument not be used. After the reading, Addison merely looked to the organist and said, 'Play on, Miss Bertha.' The majority of the congregation walked out. Only a few attended the succeeding days of the meeting which closed in failure."

This was a display of the attitude of Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26. "We don't care if it is not authorized. We don't care what division it may cause, we are going to have it anyway! 'Play on, Miss Bertha!'"

After the fighting had climaxed, approximately five sixths of the congregations accepted instruments in worship while one sixth remained non-instrumental.

Who was responsible for this division? Those who introduced the instrument or those who opposed it?

Suppose one wanted to introduce a lamb to the Lord's Supper and we opposed it and it divided the church. Who would be responsible? Those who introduced it or those who opposed it?

Once the authority of the Scriptures is rejected, there is no limit to the changes men can bring into their religion.

Many of those who rejected the authority of God with instrumental music, are now as far gone as some of the most liberal denominations.

Their rejection of the authority of God's Word concerning instrumental music led to women elders and preachers, sprinkling for baptism, no need for baptism, to even a rejection of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

**NOTICE THE SHIFTING DEFENSES OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC:**

Those who accept instrumental music have tried to defend their practice from Scripture.

It is interesting to see how the tactics have changed in debates through the years.

1. In 1920, O. E. Payne claimed that instrumental music is required by the Greek word "psallo".
2. In 1923, Ira Boswell claimed that instrumental music is permitted by the Greek word "psallo."
3. In the 1950's, Julian Hunt claimed that instrumental music was only an aid to worship, rather than an addition. This was an admission that nothing is said about it in the New Testament. He claimed he was not really adding to the Word.
4. In 1987, Given O. Blakely claimed that no authority is needed for worship. He is no longer pretending to follow the authority of God. This is a total rejection of the idea of following a pattern. Some call this a "New Hermeneutics".  
Men may rationalize all they want.

They can talk about what they feel, think or desire. It still comes down to our view of the authority of God's Word.

Are we going to strive to do our best not to add to or take away from God's Word, or are we free to change it as we see fit?

#### CONCLUSION:

The context of Colossians 3:12-16 is the unity that Christians must have.

"And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 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."

Those who brought in instruments have divided the church instead of uniting it.

They have divided the church by their insistence of adding to the Word of God.

The only way instruments can be justified in worship to God is by including them by the authority of man.

Music in the New Testament:

"And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."  
(Matthew 26:30)

"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 Thee among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Thy name.'" (Romans 15:9)

"What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also." (1 Corinthians 14:15)

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 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." (Colossians 3:16)

"...I will proclaim Thy name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise." (Hebrews 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." (Hebrews 13:15)

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises." (James 5:13)

#### SUMMARY OF THE PASSAGES:

We are told to sing.

We are told what to sing: psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

We are told how to sing: with the understanding, with the spirit, in our heart and with grace.

We are told why to sing: teach, admonish, give thanks, praise God and express cheer.

We are not told where to sing. We are not limited in location, but are to sing anywhere.

Instrumental music is not mentioned!

**This article presents some of the reasons why I (Ron Stullenbarger) choose not to use instruments of music in worship. Other reasons can be given, such as the nature of New Testament worship in contrast to Old Testament worship. This study has focused on BIBLE AUTHORITY, which is the central issue in my**

**opinion.**