

We see that it is a physical impossibility, as an example, to play a trumpet or a saxophone at the same time the worshipper sings. It cannot be done.

although an operatic or popular-music tone may not come forth. Paul did not demand perfect pitch when singing, only that the spirit of the song be directed to the proper place. But it requires training to play any instrument to the point that it can produce a melody of any kind. And anyone who has played in an orchestra or a band knows the hours of practice it requires to harmonize with others in the group.

We are better off adhering to the word of God in this matter, as in all spiritual matters. We are to sing with the spirit and with the understanding (I Corinthians 14:15). We may note here that some English translations use the word "mind" in place of the King James' "understanding". That is a forceful argument that the mental and spiritual attributes in singing praise to God outweigh the physical. ~

Morris Fraser

It is possible to sing and play the organ, or a drum, or a guitar simultaneously. Being required to do so also would require that the worshipper know how to play an instrument. Virtually everyone can sing (we note exceptions for medical and physical reasons),

NAVARRE MESSENGER

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Morning Worship Service_10:00 AM

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"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," according to English playwright William Congreve, who died almost 400 years ago. The precept lives on today; it also was an accurate concept for thousands of years before Congreve.

according to a scholarly paper from Lawrence University, is basic to man and predates spoken language. "The voice," the paper continues, "is presumed to be the original musical instrument, and there is no human culture, no matter how remote or isolated, that does not sing."

The first mechanical musical instruments are reported to be the flute (wind-activated), percussion (the drum family) and various stringed instruments.

In short order, varieties of these instruments were developed. They included the pan pipe, bullroarer, rattle,

One form of music, singing,

lyre and xylophone. None of these looked like our modern instruments, but they paved the way for what we see and hear today. And then came the piano, the organ, the cornet, trombone, clarinet, saxophone, and on and on.

The Israelites had the same instruments as nations around them. There were flutes, bagpipes, dulcimers, tambourines, cymbals, triangles and trumpets, with variations of these through time.

Musical instruments play an important role in our lives. Even if we do not play, we thrill to a marching band, enjoy the strains of classical concerts, rock to heavy metal performances. And, with technology, we are able to hear the same music on radios, televisions, CD players, even our smartphones.

It would be natural, one would think, for God to allow for those same mechanical instruments to be used in our

worship of him. At some point in time, that indeed was the case.

II Chronicles 28 tells the story of King Hezekiah rebuilding the temple and establishing worship in a special time of reopening the temple. Verse 25 cites the use of cymbals, psalteries (possibly a viol or stringed instrument), and harps. David is cited in the same passage as authority for using those instruments in temple worship.

But not always.

We know the story of Jesus establishing the Lord's Supper the night before he was tried and eventually crucified. In Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26, we read that when the apostles had finished their Passover meal, they sang a hymn and went out (to the mount of Olives and then to Gethsemane).

That Passover meal was the

continuation of a celebration Israelites had observed since their exodus from Egypt hundreds of years before. Remember that God had told them, through Moses, they should prepare a lamb, bake bread without leaven, cook other foods and eat standing up and clothed for a journey that would begin that very evening (Numbers 9:5 and Deuteronomy 16:6). Exodus 12:11 stresses, "You shall eat in haste."

While we don't know if a song was part of the ordinary celebration of the Passover feast in Jesus' day, we can observe that in Egypt, under the admonition to eat in haste, there would have been little time to sing and no time to play instruments. We must infer that instruments were not commanded to be part of that celebration, either at first or on the occasion with Jesus and the Twelve, although certainly such instruments existed.

With the crucifixion of Jesus

and the establishment of his church (Acts 2), a new order was created for worship. We see that recorded in brief form in Acts 2:42, when those first Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The only addition to those elements was singing, which is set forth in at least two passages, Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16.

Paul encourages the Ephesians to "(speak) to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Likewise, he asks the Colossians that they "(teach and admonish) one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Since history confirms the existence of mechanical instruments in the First Century A.D., it would not have required a miracle for the Holy

Spirit to have told Christians, through Paul, to play instruments in worship.

Historically, early Christians did not use instruments in worship. The first confirmed use of the organ was in the mid-Ninth Century, used in the Roman Catholic (Western) church, but it was not widespread until about 400 years later. Meanwhile, the Orthodox (Eastern) church did not use instruments for a much longer period of time. Even today, the Eastern Church allows each congregation to determine if instruments are to be used and, if so, what kind. It generally is taught that instruments may be used in their worship according to the culture in which its adherents live.

Some in the denominational world who favor using instruments will note the Greek word "psallo", which is translated "making melody" in Ephesians 5:19. They maintain that the Greek means "to pluck" and want that to refer

to using stringed instruments. It is true that one of the meanings of "psallo" is to pluck. But it has the more basic meaning of making melody. In that line, Paul tells the Ephesians not only to make melody but tells where – in their hearts.

That follows the important and basic rule of Christ's teaching that his followers are to believe in him and behave in a spiritual manner at all times – making melody in the heart, not on an organ or a guitar – that follows that admonition.

There is a practical side to the issue of whether Christians are allowed, under the interpretation that "psallo" allows instruments, to play instruments. If that were so, then Ephesians not only allows but demands that each Christian both sing and play an instrument in worship. The command itself is clear; the interpretation must follow as clearly.