Strange Things You Hear About the Church of Christ Part 8
"You Don't Believe In Instruments of Music"
John 4:23-24
(Adapted from a lesson by Jack Williams)
By Russ Earl

Introduction:

1. In our lesson this morning we looked to the clear teaching of what the Lord said in the New Testament regarding music in worship.
2. Tonight we begin examining some of the arguments offered in defense of using mechanical instruments in worship.

I. They Are Used in the Old Testament (And Even King David Used Them)

1. If we accept the argument of using an item of Old Testament worship, on the same basis we could bring in:
   (1) Dancing - Psalm 150:3-4
   (2) Animal sacrifices - Leviticus, etc.
   (3) Burning of incense - Exodus 30:1

2. Using David as an example also leads to some additional problems
   (1) What are we to do with his multiple wives and other transgressions in his life? (It is clear he is not to be our example! - cf. 1 Peter 2:21)

   (2) An argument can be made that David not only worshiped with mechanical instruments, but that he (some 400 years after the giving of the Law at Sinai) was the one who introduced them (2 Chronicles 29:25) and that a woe was pronounced upon the practice of such (Amos 6:5).

3. One matter often overlooked as people point out the frequency of the mention of mechanical music in praise of God in the Old Testament, *contrasted with the total absence of instrumental music in the New Testament*.

4. The most important thing though, is our standard must be the New Testament, not the old (cf. Colossians 2:14; Galatians 5:4).

II. Paul Commanded Them in Ephesians 5:19

1. This argument is also known as the "PSALLO" argument, since it hinges on the use of that Greek word in the passage. The claim is made that the word PSALLO means to pluck or twang a stringed instrument, thus Paul is teaching the accompaniment of singing with a mechanical instrument.

2. Some things to consider if this argument is valid:
   (1) This passage is a command. If PSALLO is teaching the accompaniment of mechanical instruments, *mechanical music would not be an option but a requirement*.

   (2) If the definition of the word is proper, not only **must** I play a mechanical instrument to worship God, but I **must play a stringed instrument which I pluck or twang.**

   Of course those who make the argument do not teach such. (It is easy to make an argument if you disregard the consequences of the argument and determine to have it your way all the way (cf. Matthew 15:9).

3. What then is the truth of this passage?

(1) PSALLO does not necessarily mean "sing with musical accompaniment." Psallo conveys the action of twitching or twanging, *but the instrument intended to be touched is specified*. (cf. 1 Samuel 16:16 - "player" in the LXX is from PSALLO)

(2) Likewise in Ephesians 5: 19 the instrument to be touched is specified. The stated instrument is the human heart, "…making melody in your heart to the Lord."

4. Note the following chart regarding the Scriptural purposes of music in worship:

The Bible The Commands:	**The Voice**	**An Instrument**
Speak in song (Eph 5:19)	Can	Cannot
Teach (Col 3:16)	Can	Cannot
Admonish (Col 3:16)	Can	Cannot
Sing with spirit (1 Cor 14:15)	Can	Cannot
Sing with understanding (1 Cor 14:15)	Can	Cannot
Praise God (Heb 2:12)	Can	Cannot
Make melody in the heart (Eph 5:19)	Can	Cannot

The human voice is capable of doing everything which God commands us to do as music in worship. A mechanical instrument cannot do anything required by God in worship with music (except make melody, and it does not do that in the heart as God commands).

III. **There are Mechanical Instruments Used In Heaven** (Revelation 14:2; 15:2; 18:22)

1. Those who make this argument fail to discern important matters in their study of God's Word...
   (1) They fail to acknowledge the very nature of the book of Revelation (1:1-2). The proof texts to which they appeal are each clearly figurative passages - but even if we conceded that actual mechanical instruments were used we still have not addressed what God has authorized in worship on this earth.

2. They fail to be consistent in their handling of this book...
   (1) Are we ready to use everything in worship that is mentioned in heaven? (incense – Revelation 5:8; sickels – 14:4; golden girdles – 15:6; golden reed – 21:15)

   (2) Are we ready to use heaven as the pattern for this life? (For example, remember that no marriage is there – Matthew 22:30)

IV. It is Not An Addition, Just An Aid (Like song books, microphone, etc.)

1. An aid is something that acts as an expedient to accomplish an action. When one uses a song book, microphone, lights – they are still just making the specific music of singing.

2. An addition is something that adds another dimension or type of act to an action. When a mechanical instrument is used an *additional type of music* is enjoined. (ie - gopher wood / oak; unleavened bread / leavened)

Conclusion:

William Woodson rightly stated,

> *It is crucially important to observe that although instrumental music of various types was readily available in contemporary society, no passage shows that the churches mentioned in the New Testament ever used instrumental music in worship. Did they not understand the true meaning of the Old Testament, particularly Psalms? Did they not understand the meaning of various words, such as psallo, etc., so often discussed pro and con in contemporary debates? Did they not know the Jewish practices, both in the temple and in the synagogues? Did they not know the mind of God? Most certainly, on all these questions and much more. Yet, there is not even a hint of the use of instrumental music in the worship of these churches.*
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> *These facts of New Testament history stand as a stone barricade against any attempted justification of the use of instrumental music in worship today. If present appeals to the Old Testament, i.e., psallo, the temple or synagogue practice, etc., legitimately warrant such use, why did the apostles and brethren in the first century not so understand and incorporate instrumental music into the worship of these churches? Such facts are not lightly to be dismissed or forgotten.*
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> ("History of Music in Worship," in *The Christian Courier*, June, 2006)