

<i>Notes</i>



APRIL 7, 2019

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### Meeting Times

Sunday

Bible Class 9:30am

Worship 10:30am

  

Worship 6:00pm

  

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00pm

  

Ladies Bible Class  
meets at 10am on  
Tuesdays

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### The Meaning of "Psallo"

*Eric Lyons*

After failing to discover a biblical command, a binding example, or a necessary inference for the use of mechanical instruments in Christian worship, those who advocate the use of such music often sometimes allege that the term "psallo" includes the use of instrumental music. "Psallo" is the Greek verb translated "making melody" in Ephesians 5:19, and "I will sing" in 1 Corinthians 14:15. The noun form of this term, "psalmos", appears in such passages as 1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 5:19, and Colossians 3:16. If one looks up "psallo" in a Greek lexicon, he probably will find the following definitions: to touch, pull, or pluck; to twitch the strings on a carpenter's line; to pluck or strike the cords on a musical instrument; to sing praises. Upon reviewing these definitions, some claim that Paul's use of "psallo" and "psalmos" implies the use of a stringed instrument in worship. They further assert that these words "always" convey the idea of instrumental accompaniment to singing, even if the instrument is not mentioned. Are they correct? If not, why not?

When one studies the etymology of this word, he will find that it is incorrect to say that every time "psallo" was used in antiquity, it meant to play an instrument.

By studying reliable Greek lexicons (dictionaries) and various historical documents, one soon comes to understand that the term psallo has had a variety of meanings in different periods of its history. In fact, the evidence indicates that even before Christ came to Earth, psallo no longer meant to play instruments of music. Numerous scholarly sources could be cited to prove this point, but for the sake of space, three will suffice. First, Walter Bauer's highly respected lexicon, revised by Frederick Danker in 2000, indicates that even in the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament that appeared about 250 years before Christ was born), it "is usually the case" that psallo is translated as only "to sing" (2000, p. 1096). In Henry Thayer's often-quoted Greek lexicon, he noted that by the time the events recorded in the New Testament took place, psallo meant "to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song" (1962, p. 675). Finally, E. A. Sophocles, a native Greek and for thirty-eight years a professor of the Greek language at Harvard University, declared (after examining a plethora of secular and religious historical documents) that there was not a single example of psallo ever used in the time of Christ that involved or implied the use of an instrument; rather, it always meant to chant or sing religious hymns (see Kurfees, 1999, p. 47).

When one wishes to know the definition of a word from times past, he must inquire as to how the word was used at any particular time in history. For example, when one reads the word "prevent" in the King James Version (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:15), he must understand that this word does not mean the same thing it did when this version was first produced in 1611. Then, it meant "to go before; to precede." Today, it means "to keep from happening; to impede." The word "idiot" was used in the seventeenth century in reference to one "in a private station, as distinguished from one holding public office." Today, it is used to speak of "an unlearned, or ignorant person." Just as these English words once had meanings that now are entirely obsolete, the Greek word psallo once meant "to pluck or strike the chords of a musical instrument." But, before the beginning of the New Testament period, it had lost this meaning. In his well-researched book, *Instrumental Music in the Worship*, M.C. Kurfees noted that the word psallo never is used in the New Testament or in contemporaneous literature to mean anything other than to sing (1999, p. 45). The other meanings had entirely disappeared by the time the New Testament was written.

The fact is, however, even if this word had retained all of its original meanings (and the evidence shows that it had not), the letters Paul penned to the Christians in Ephesus and Colossae specifically name the "plucked" instrument—the heart. Thus, a harp, piano, banjo, or any other kind of musical instrument are not integral part of psallo.

## Order of Service

Opening Remarks		Leonard Meredith
Song Leader		Tom Barr
Song #111	<i>Come We That Love the Lord</i>	
Song #841	<i>Sing and Be Happy</i>	
Prayer		Clay Bond
Song #359	<i>Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross</i>	
Communion		Ray Parks Chris Windham
Song #825	<i>I Love My Savior Too</i>	
Song #531	<i>Praise the Lord</i>	
Sermon		Clay Bond
Song #707	<i>To Christ Be Loyal and Be True</i>	
Offering		
Closing Remarks		Leonard Meredith
Song #642	<i>The Lord's My Shepherd</i>	
Dismissal Prayer		Wendell Harrison

### Upcoming Events:

- Today! Pot Luck Fellowship after morning worship
- May 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Focal Point Workshop at University Church of Christ in San Marcos
- June 5<sup>th</sup> – Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> Summer Series
- Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Gospel Meeting with Ken Hope

### Wednesday Devotional

April 10<sup>th</sup> Sam Phillips  
 April 17<sup>th</sup> Holton George  
 April 24<sup>th</sup>

### ...Prayer List...

*Gay Kyle, Butch Crownover, Chris' cousin Tyler, Esmeralda Medina*

Remember our college students who are away at school: Jarrett & Luke Haydon

Shut-Ins: Robbi George

Attendance: Sunday AM: 36 PM: 24 Wednesday: 22 Contribution: \$3545.51