

Back To Basics

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WHOSE RIGHT IT IS

Johnie Edwards

There are those who think it is their right to change the word of God to suit their own desires. Ezekiel recorded, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come *whose right it is*; and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:27). There are just some things we have no right to tamper with.

1) WHOSE RIGHT IS IT TO CHANGE THE DAY OF WORSHIP? A lot of churches, for one reason or another, are changing the day of worship from the first day of the week to the seventh day. It is becoming common for churches to meet on Saturday evening and offer the Lord's supper. Whose right is it to make such a change? I read where the early church came together "upon the first day of the week...to break bread" (Acts 20:7). Since the first day of the week is specified, all other days are excluded. If not, why not? Those who are taking the communion on Saturday evening should consider who gave us that right. I thought the Lord had "all authority" (Mt. 28:18).

2) WHOSE RIGHT IS IT TO CHANGE THE NAME? The New Testament church belongs to Christ. He is the builder (Mt. 16:18), the head (Col. 1:18), the saviour (Eph. 5:23), and must have the preeminence (Col. 1:18). It is no wonder Paul referred to the Lord's church as,

"the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). Whose right is it to call the church by other names as can be seen on church buildings here and there? There are those, even among churches of Christ, who want to quit calling themselves churches of Christ and are just saying, "The Main Street Church." Who gave the right to not identify the Lord's church by name? We might also ask, Who has the right to call members of the church by human names, since God called His people Christians (Acts 11:26)?

3) WHOSE RIGHT IS IT TO ADD ANOTHER KIND OF MUSIC? There are two kinds of music: vocal and mechanical instrumental. The New Testament, which regulates New Testament worship, teaches us to sing. A good example of the ten passages on the subject is Ephesians 5:19, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, *singing* and making melody in your heart to the Lord." This passage says to sing or make vocal music. By the way, whatever Ephesians 5:19 tells me to do, it tells you to do. So, if the passage commands both singing and playing, every person would have to sing and play! If not, why not? We need to get back to the basics and ask, "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?" (Mt. 21:23-27).

THE COLLECTION

Johnie Paul Edwards

Paul, being deeply concerned about the needs of the Jerusalem church, instructed the Corinthians to gather for the relief of the saints. Let's notice some things about this collection.

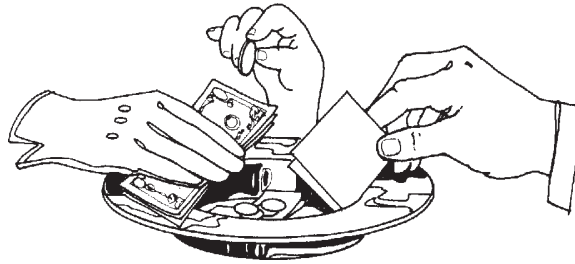
1) THE COLLECTION WAS FOR SAINTS. The text says, "Now concerning the collection for the saints..." (1 Cor. 16:1). This collection was not for the poor in general, but it was for needy saints. Today, many want to assist the general poor out of the church treasury and Bible teaching will not allow this.

2) THE COLLECTION WAS ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. The early Christians observed the first day of the week. They ate the Lord's supper on "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). Paul taught the Corinthians, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store..." (1 Cor. 16:2). There is no Scriptural authority for a church collection on any other day of the week.

3) THE COLLECTION WAS FOR EACH CHRISTIAN. Paul said, "Let every one of you lay

by him in store..." (1 Cor. 16:2). This collection was to be universal among the Corinthian Christians. Whether rich or poor, they were to contribute. The Macedonian Christians, "in deep

poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (2 Cor. 8:2).



4) THE COLLECTION WAS TO BE IN STORE. The admonition was to "lay by him in store...that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2). The words "in store" indicate the collection was to be laid up or stored up in a treasury, so no collections would have to be made when Paul came to take their liberality unto Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:3).

5) THE COLLECTION WAS AS ONE PROSPERED. Paul did not specify a certain amount to be contributed. The giving of the Corinthians was to be in direct proportion to the way they had been prospered.

Although this collection was for needy saints, Paul's guidelines regulate our collection for all authorized work of the Lord's church.

Back To Basics

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ESSENTIALS AND INCIDENTALS #3

John Isaac Edwards

6) **GOSPEL TEACHING.** The Lord limited that which is taught in His name to “repentance and remission of sins” (Lk. 24:47), “the gospel” (Mk. 16:15), and “whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:20). Specific arrangements and methods of communicating the gospel message (such as sermons, Bible classes, printed materials, audio-visual aids, radio, television, internet) have not been bound, but are governed by the principles of Bible expediency (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23).

7) **RELIEVING THE DESTITUTE.** Those for whom the church is to care has been plainly circumscribed on the pages of divine inspiration to include certain “poor saints” (Rom. 15:26). The individual Christian has charge in this capacity that exceeds that of the local church. The Lord commanded, “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and *let not the church be charged*; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed” (1 Tim. 5:16). Who is assisted by whom is a thing essential, but the details necessary to carry out the work (such as the place, the provisions, and the personnel), regardless of who does the work, are matters incidental.

8) **SUPPORT OF GOSPEL PREACHING.** As the temple ministers lived of the temple, “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:13-14). Anything ordained by the Lord is essential! Individuals, as well as churches, have responsibility to provide for those who labor in the word (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 11:8; Gal. 6:6). The example of the fellowship of the Philippians with Paul in the gospel sets the precedent as to how the local church is to support the preaching of the gospel (Phil. 4:15-16). The funds were

sent directly from the church to the preacher. That the preaching of the gospel is supported, and how it is supported, is essential. The particular provisions of the support are left to the judgment of the brethren involved, to be determined through consideration of just standards.

Where the Lord has incidentalized, we must not essentialize; and where the Lord has essentialized, we must not incidentalize (one binds where God has not bound and the other looses where God has bound). That may not be good grammar, but that says it like it are!

Whose Right It Is

Johnie Edwards.....1

The Collection

Johnie Paul Edwards.....2

Essentials And Incidentals #3

John Isaac Edwards.....3

Lead Us Not Into Temptation

Charles Carpenter.....4

The Circumcision Made Without Hands

Lewis Willis.....5

The Humanity And Divinity Of Jesus

Billy Boyd.....6

The Works Of The Flesh

David McPherson.....8

Browsing Through God's Library

Joe Corley.....9

Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams.....10

In Defense Of Mechanical Music

Johnie Edwards.....11

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Charles Carpenter

“**A**nd lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...” (Mt. 6:13).

1) **DEFINITIONS.** “Lead” (to guide or conduct, to draw by influence, to allure); “tempt” (to test, to entice, to prove); “temptation” (the enticement of a person to commit sin by offering some seeming advantage); “deliver” (to release, to set free from restraint); “evil” (anything depriving of good, in Greek - masculine singular - the devil).

2) **EXAMPLES OF TEMPTATION.** Under the old covenant, God proved or tested His people to see whether they would walk in His way or not. The words “prove” or “tempt” are the same Hebrew word in the Old Testament and mean the same thing. God did tempt Abraham (Gen. 22:1-2), in commanding him to offer up his son Isaac. God intended to prove or test his obedience and faith, to confirm and strengthen him by this trial, and to furnish in him an example of perfect obedience for all succeeding ages. God rained bread from heaven for the Israelites to gather a certain amount every day “that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no” (Ex. 16:4).

3) **SATAN TEMPTS US.** Satan has many methods of seducing men from the truth. Paul was fearful that Satan might be successful in Thessalonica, since Satan was the real author of the persecutions that had taken place. Paul wrote, “lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain” (1 Th. 3:5). In a time of trial of any kind, Satan endeavors to tempt us to swerve from the truth. Satan often tempts the sufferer to murmur and complain, to charge God with harshness, par-

tiality and severity. In all times of affliction, as well as prosperity, we may be sure that the “tempter” is not far off.

4) **WORDS OF JAMES.** Some form of the word “tempt” is used six times in James 1:12-14. Temptation in verse 12 is used in the most general sense as denoting any thing that will try one’s faith. It could be affliction, persecution or a direct inducement to sin placed before the mind. The writer states in verse 13 that whatever has tempted us to commit sin cannot be charged to God. God does nothing at all with a view to induce us to do evil or wrong. God does not place inducements before us with a view that we should sin or in order to lead us into sin. The real force of temptation is to be traced to some other source - to ourselves and not to God. James continues this thought in verse 14 as he points out that the source of all temptation is in man himself. Being enticed refers to being entrapped or caught; man is led along until he falls into sin as in a snare that springs suddenly upon him.

5) **THE MODEL PRAYER (MT. 6:13).** It is implied that God has such control over the tempter as to save us from that power if we call upon Him. We fall so fearfully because we purposefully linger in the neighborhood of temptation and willfully tamper with it. John Ruskin said, “Faithful prayer always implies exertion: and no man can ask honestly and hopefully to be delivered from temptation unless he himself has honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it.”

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THE CIRCUMCISION MADE WITHOUT HANDS

Lewis Willis

The text for this study is Colossians 2:11-13, in which a contrast is drawn between physical and spiritual circumcision: "In whom also ye are circumcised with *the circumcision made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

The history of circumcision is basic to Paul's statement. Circumcision, the cutting off of the foreskin, was a rite instituted by God as a sign of the covenant He made with Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel. Every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day. Parents who did not circumcise their children were cut off from the covenant people (Gen. 17:9-14).

In the first century, after the church had been established and the gospel had been preached to the Gentiles, the question of circumcision became a matter of concern in the Scriptures. After the conversion of Cornelius, Jewish Christians were upset because these uncircumcised Gentiles had been accepted in Christ (Acts 11:1-3).

Those who demanded the Gentiles be circumcised became known as "Judaizing teachers." They ultimately demanded that the converted Gentiles not only be circumcised, but also be required to keep the old Jewish law (Acts 15:1-5). So great was the controversy that a conference was summoned in Jerusalem to settle the question of Gentile circumcision (Acts 15). The Jews who demanded

Gentile circumcision were rebuked because "no such commandment" had been given (Acts 15:24). Therefore, physical circumcision was no longer required. In Christ, it did not matter whether or not one was physically circumcised (Gal. 5:6).

The circumcision envisioned in our text is the cutting off or putting off of "the sins of the flesh." This task is accomplished by a "circumcision of Christ." A sinner is said to be "dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh." That dead sinner is "buried with him in baptism" so that the sin which produces spiritual death is put off, cut off, or remitted (Acts 2:38). Paul said, in another passage, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). In baptism, sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).

Thus, baptism is the circumcision made without hands. God designed New Testament baptism to accomplish spiritually what physical circumcision accomplished for the ancient Jews. When a sinner obeys Christ's command to be baptized (Mt. 28:19), he is raised from that watery grave - from that circumcision made without hands - to walk in newness of life! As a Christian, a member of the church, the old life of sin has been laid aside, and one is forgiven of "all trespasses." This is an "operation of God" - He makes it work! This result does not come from human hands. Have you been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands through baptism? If not, you are urged to be baptized today. Christians will be happy to assist you in obeying Christ.

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THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS

Billy Boyd

The greatest mystery ever thrust upon the mind of man was penned by John in John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” How can this be? How can humanity and divinity be combined in the same being? It was this great mystery that caused Paul to write in 1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.” This mystery of “God manifested in the flesh” has perplexed the greatest minds since its revelation in the first century, and it perplexes some among us today.

There are some who affirm that Jesus was an ordinary man while on earth, that He left His divinity in heaven, or at least He voluntarily gave up the use of His divine attributes while in the flesh. Others have affirmed that Jesus had two spirits, one human and the other divine. Such positions are the result of approaching the divine mystery of “God in the flesh” from the standpoint of human wisdom. It is an attempt to fit the round peg of this great truth into the square hole of finite minds. It cannot be done. If we are to “know the certainty” about the humanity and divinity of Jesus, we must be content to believe what the Bible says and not to go beyond what is written.

Where shall we begin? The divinely inspired story of Jesus is told in the four gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They each begin at a different place. Matthew begins with the place of Jesus in the genealogical table of the people of Israel. Luke begins with the circumstances surrounding the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. John starts “In the beginning”

with the preexistent Word. Mark jumps right into the beginning of Jesus’ ministry on earth.

So where shall we begin our study of our Lord’s humanity and divinity so that we might come to **know the certainty** of both?

1) **THE HUMANITY OF JESUS.** Perhaps, it will be best if we seek to see Jesus as His disciples and the people of His day saw Him. Then we will surely see His humanity, for they first saw Him as a man.

To be sure, there were some strange things connected with the births of both John and Jesus, but for the most part people wondered about them and pondered them in their heart (Lk. 1:65-66; 2:18-19); they did not, early on, make the connection between the birth of Jesus and His divinity.

The people of Jesus’ day, including His disciples, had no trouble with His humanity. They knew He was “in the flesh.” They saw Him eat, sleep, grow weary, need water, and walk from place to place just as they did. Some of them watched Him as “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Lk. 2:52), but they did not know, at that point, that He was the Son of God.

Concerning His being in the flesh, John wrote: “That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life” (1 Jn. 1:1).

His being a man was so evident that John wrote that anyone who denied this was the antichrist (1 Jn. 4:2-3). So He was made in all

things like unto His brethren (Heb. 1:17), and was tempted “in all points like as we are...” (Heb. 4:15). He was made “in the likeness of men” and “found in fashion as a man” (Phil. 2:7-8). I repeat, the Jews who knew Jesus during His childhood years and His early ministry, had no trouble with His humanity. They observed it.

2) **THE DIVINITY OF JESUS.** The Jews began to have trouble with who Jesus was when they observed all that He “began to do and teach.” Certainly the Jewish teachers were astonished at His understanding, when, as a twelve year old boy, He sat in their midst “both listening to them and asking them questions” (Lk. 2:46-47). Yet, they could write that off as His being a child prodigy.

After He began His public ministry, they soon realized that He was no ordinary man. After His great “Sermon on the Mount,” Matthew says, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mt. 7:28-29). They could even accept Him as a great teacher, and so at this point, there was no organized opposition to Jesus.

However, as the word of Jesus’ marvelous miracles began to spread, and people began to associate Him with the promised Messiah (Mt. 11:1-6), the opposition of the Jewish leaders increased (Mt. 12:14). They could not acknowledge Him as the Christ, for then they must submit to Him as the Anointed of God.

Then, their opposition reached a crescendo when He made it clear that He was more than the promised One to sit on David’s throne, that He was the very Son of God. They knew well the implication of His claiming that God was His Father in John 5:18. “Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Fa-

ther, making Himself equal with God” (Jn. 5:18). They had been willing to accept His humanity but they could not accept His claim of deity. To them this was a sign of a demented person who was guilty of blasphemy. In John 10:25-27, when Jesus claimed that He was the Christ and that God was His Father, they took up stones to stone Him. When He asked them why they were going to stone Him, they said: “For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, and because you, being a man, make yourself God.” They did not believe that God could be in the flesh, that a person could be both man and God at the same time.

When Jesus demonstrated that He possessed the authority and power of the Eternal God, thus showing that He was God, the Jews could no longer tolerate Him. He had shown His power over nature (Jn. 2:1-11; Mt. 8:23-27); His authority to forgive sins (which only God can do) (Mk. 2:1-12); and many other signs to cause us to believe that He is the Son of God (Jn. 20:30-31). He then climaxed His miracles by raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:28-44). This event caused such an outpouring of people believing in Jesus that the chief priests and Pharisees feared that everyone would believe in Him, so “from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death” (Jn. 11:45-53). They thought that by crucifying Him, they could bury His claims in the dust.

But in the greatest demonstration of His deity, He burst forth from the tomb, and by His resurrection forever sealed His claim to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). So with great confidence we can know the certainty about both the humanity and divinity of Christ. While on earth He was a man, but He was also God. We may not understand all the implications of this, but we can believe it with the full assurance of God’s word.

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THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

David McPherson

In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul lists some works which condemn man and prevent him from going to heaven. Consider please these damnable works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).

1) **ADULTERY.** Unlawful sex in violation of the marriage vow (Rom. 7:3). Folks divorcing (for cause other than fornication) and remarriage are among those guilty of such (Mt. 19:9).

2) **FORNICATION.** Illicit sex between unmarried persons. There is a great need today for more “Josephs” who will “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Th. 4:3; Gen. 39:12).

3) **UNCLEANNES.** Impurity of mind and body. Such includes bestiality, sodomy, homosexuality, and lesbianism (Rom. 1:24-27).

4) **LASCIVIOUSNESS.** Indecency. “Wanton acts...indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females.” There is your modern dance, petting, and all other filth (Rom. 13:13).

5) **IDOLATRY.** Worship of things other than God. Whether hobbies, job, family, or whatever - if put before God it is idolatry (1 Pet. 4:3).

6) **WITCHCRAFT.** Magic, sorcery. Brethren and palm readers do not mix (Acts 19:19-20).

7) **HATRED.** Enmity, ill will. We must ever hate sin, but not the sinner (Ti. 3:3).

8) **VARIANCE.** Strife, contentions, wranglings, quarrelings. How sad to see these among the people of God (1 Cor. 1:11).

9) **EMULATIONS.** Jealousies, ambitious rivalries. One who has ill thoughts at the success of another is wrong (Prov. 27:4; Lk. 15:25-32).

10) **WRATH.** Explosive temper. Do not be a “hot-head” who over reacts. Wrath can and must be controlled (Eph. 4:31).

11) **STRIFE.** Similar to variance. Faction, contention. Carries the idea of self-seeking, getting ahead at another’s expense (Phil. 2:3).

12) **SEDITIONS.** Dissensions, divisions, party spirit. Sometimes brethren are guilty by setting up unnecessary “camps” (Rom. 16:17-18).

13) **HERESIES.** Ruinous sects, disunion. This goes against Jesus’ prayer for unity (Jn. 17).

14) **ENVYINGS.** Similar to jealousies. Resentment, grudging. A rottenness (Prov. 14:30).

15) **MURDERS.** Unlawful taking of life. Abortion fits here. Read Matthew 5:21-26.

16) **DRUNKENNESS.** Intoxication. Three words regarding alcohol: “Just say NO” (1 Pet. 4:3-4; 1 Cor. 6:10; Prov. 23:29-32).

17) **REVELLINGS.** Carousing. Excessive partying, without restraint (Rom. 13:13).

18) **SUCH LIKE.** Anything that would resemble a forty-second cousin to the aforementioned.

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The book of **Joshua** tells of the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, and the division of that land among the tribes of Israel. **Judges** is so named because of a period of time (lasting about 150 to 200 years) when the Israelites were often rebellious, and God allowed them to fall prey to their enemies. When they would repent and return to God, He would select someone to deliver them from the invaders. These deliverers were called “Judges.” There were fifteen in number, the last being Samuel. The little book of **Ruth** is a beautiful love story: the love of a widowed daughter-in-law (Ruth) toward her widowed mother-in-law (Naomi), and the love that developed between Ruth, who was poor, and Boaz, who was a rich land owner. This love culminated in marriage. This book gives an insight into conditions during the time of the Judges. The books of **First and Second Samuel** cover about 130 years of history. They begin with the birth of Samuel (the last Judge), and end with the declining life of

In our next article, we will take a brief look at the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams

Memory Verse: *"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth..."* (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Find The Young Person

The Bible often mentions young people. Fill in the blank with the name of the young person. Then, find the person in the puzzle.

_____ became king at age 8 (2 Kings 22:1).
_____ was a queen who saved her people (Esther 7:1-8).
_____ slew a giant (1 Samuel 17:48-50).
_____ was about His Father's business (Luke 2:49-52).
_____ was taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5).
_____ ran from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:7-12).
A certain _____ would not leave his riches to follow Jesus (Luke 18:18-30).



***"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"*** (Mark 10:14).

IN DEFENSE OF MECHANICAL MUSIC

Johnie Edwards

In defense of mechanical instrumental music in worship, men often appeal to the Greek word *Psallo*, which, according to Thayer's Lexicon, means: "primarily to twitch, twang, then, to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, and hence, to sing with a harp..."

The problem with those who quote Thayer in defense of mechanical music is that they stop too quickly. If they had kept on reading, they would have read: "...in the New Testament, to sing a hymn, sing praise, make melody." Then, Mr. Thayer gives Ephesians 5:19 as an example of how the word is used!

1) **ISN'T IT STRANGE?** There were 148 of the world's best scholars who translated the King James Version of the Bible in 1611 and the American Standard Version of 1901. They all say the Greek word "psallo" means to "sing and make melody." That is good and basic enough for me. How about you?

2) **PSALLO INCLUDES THE INSTRUMENT.** The mechanical instrument advocates insist that "psallo" includes a mechanical instrument. Now watch this: An archer "psalloses" the bow string. In like manner, the musician strikes the strings or chords of an instrument, and this is "psalloing." You cannot make a verb a part of the definition. If I were to use the verb "cut." Cut what? Cut a watermelon - is the watermelon a part of the definition? No way! The instrument on which one "psalloses" has to be specified, and the Bible says the instrument is the heart (Eph. 5:19). Read it.

3) **WHAT ONE DOES ALL MUST DO.** Let's take a look at Ephesians 5:19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Whatever one is told to do, everyone is told to do. If one is told to play a mechanical instrument, all are told to play. If not, why not? So, in this case, only the person who is playing a mechanical instrument and singing is doing what the Lord said to! If the Greek word "psallo" includes playing and singing, every single person would have to play and sing. And who does this? Think about it.

We are going to have to get back to teaching these basic concepts so folks can know the truth on this subject.

"How Readeest Thou?"

Test Your Bible Knowledge

List, in order, the steps in the gospel plan of salvation, with a passage for each step.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Answer:
Hear (Mt. 17:5), believe (Jn. 8:24), repent (Lk. 13:3),
confess Christ (Mt. 10:32), be baptized (Acts 2:38),
live faithfully (Rev. 2:10).



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