

# EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

*“A first century church in the 21st century”*

## Bible Reading Plan

Week 24

- Proverbs 16-18; *Rom 15*
- Pro 19-21; Ps 40; *Rom 16*
- Pro 22-23; Ps 117; *1Thes 1*
- Pro 24-25; Ps 41; *1Thes 2*
- Pro 26-28; *1Thes 3*

## Leading Services

Announcements: Ron V.

### *Morning:*

Song Leader: Bill G.

Opening Prayer: Richard L.

Lord's Table: Zack V.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Tony Y.

### *Evening:*

Song Leader: Mike V.

Opening Prayer: Zack V.

Closing Prayer: Ben V.

Scripture Reading: Larry L.  
(Zechariah 5:1-11)

## Sermons

AM: Fundamentals of Repentance  
PM: Deceiving Ourselves



## Singing Praises

In His closing exhortation to the Hebrews, the writer urged, “Through him let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, continually, that is, the fruit of our lips which make confession to his name” (Heb. 13:15).

There are at least three different ways by which we may offer a sacrifice of praise to God through Jesus. We may teach men of His nature, His blessings, His grace, and His warnings. We may make our petition of our needs and express our gratitude for His lovingkindness to us through our prayers to Him. And, we may, as millions in both earth and heaven have done and continue to do, use our tongues as we lift our voice in song to Him who is worthy to be praised.

Singing can be an act of devotion I offer to God when I am alone. James wrote, “Is any cheerful? Let him sing praises” (5:13). Singing can be a collective sacrifice offered by the many.

Continues on Page 2

## Singing praises in the Kingdom of God

The night Jesus instituted His supper, He, with His apostles, “sang a hymn and went out unto the mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:30). In Psalm 22:22 is found these words: “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing thy praise.” The Hebrew writer applied these words to Christ (2:12).

Early Christians sang praises to God. Sometimes their songs might be prompted by the Spirit: “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor. 14:15). This passage was part of the section devoted to the question, “Now concerning spiritual gifts I would not have you to be ignorant” (1 Cor. 12:11).

The subject of spiritual gifts was dealt with in 1 Corinthians 12-14. In chapter 12 the apostle identified the nine gifts, showing that not all had the same gift. In chapter 13 Paul set forth the duration of these gifts. In chapter 14 Paul sets guidelines and regulations for these gifts so long as they existed in the church. It was in this latter chapter (14) that the apostle said, “I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding, also.” In this chapter he had dealt with the problem at Corinth (and likely in other congregations as well) in which there were those who spoke in a language in a congregation in which none understood the language and no one bothered to interpret what the “tongue speaker” had said. The apostle forbade such to be done. He gave instructions that if a man spoke with a tongue others did not understand then he must either interpret the tongue himself or have someone who could interpret tongues to do so. But if neither option was possible, the apostle forbade a man to speak in a tongue those present did not understand.

Thus, when he said, “I will sing with the spirit and I sing with the understanding, also,” he was telling brethren that just as they were to interpret what they said so that those listening could understand, so they must also sing in a language that those present could understand (1 Cor. 14:27-28).

Not all had spiritual gifts, so not all songs were “sung with the spirit.” Such was the nature of his instructions to the Ephesians and Colossians. In Ephesians 5:19 Paul wrote, “Speaking one to another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.” The Colossian instructions were similar: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

These two passages set forth the kind of music we are to sing when we wish to praise God: psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The word “psalms” possibly denotes a song that was inspired by the Holy Spirit. A hymn offers praise to God and spiritual songs are songs with spiritual themes. Patriotic and love songs have a place in the lives of men, but that place is not in the worship of our Creator.

Our singing is congregational. We “teach and admonish one another.” The worship of the first Christians was a capella — the voice was the only instrument making melody. Since that was the practice of early Christians, we believe it should be the practice of twenty-first century Christians as well.

Instrumental music was not part of the worship of first century Christians —not because instruments had not been invented, nor that Christians in their former worship were not accustomed to their use. Both Jews in religious services and pagans in the worship of idols used instruments. Christians just didn’t use them and it would be many, many centuries before they were introduced into worship. In the church’s first major division, the separation of the Roman church from the Greek Orthodox in the eleventh century, one of the distinctions between the two was that the Roman church used instrumental music in their worship but the Greek church did not.

We will answer several of the arguments offered in defense of instruments in worship in our next article. I will cover arguments such as “Instruments are not forbidden,” “David used them,” and “instruments are just an aid.” We will conclude our study with biblical reasons why instruments of music are additions to the word of God, and therefore sinful.

*- Jim McDonald*