

**The Bible and Dance**  
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## **Introduction**

The Scripture refers to the practice of dancing in one of two ways, either that which honors the Lord in worship or that which is evil and sensual. The passages with the *KJV* words “*dance*,” “*dances*,” “*danced*,” and “*dancing*” occur as follows:

*Dance*: Jdg. 21:21; Job 21:11; Pss. 149:3; 150:4; Eccl. 3:4; Isa. 13:21; Jer. 31:13; and Lam. 5:15.

*Dances*: Ex. 15:20; Jdg. 11:34; 21:21; I Sam. 21:11; 29:15; and Jer. 32:4.

*Danced*: Jdg. 21:23; II Sam. 6:14; Mt. 11:17; 14:6; Mk. 6:22; and Lk. 7:32.

*Dancing*: Ex. 32:19; I Sam. 18:6; 30:16; II Sam. 6:16; I Chr. 15:29; Ps. 30:11; and Lk. 15:25.

The related Hebrew and Greek words are the following:

## **Old Testament**

### **Verbs**

חָנַג (verb meaning to dance by going around [16x])

חָזַל (verb meaning to dance, be pained, tremble, travail, shake [62x])

פָּרַר (verb meaning to dance in a whirl [2x])

רָקַד (verb meaning to dance, skip, leap jump [9x])

### **Nouns**

מְחֹלָה (noun meaning dance [6x])

מְחֹלָה (noun meaning dance [6x])

## **New Testament**

### **Verb**

ὀρχέομαι (verb meaning to dance in a circle [4x])

### **Noun**

χορός (noun meaning circle [1x])

NT saints should **W.E.A.N.** themselves from OT practices such as dancing for the following reasons:

## **I. WORSHIP**

*Worship in spirit and truth* (Jn. 4:24; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)

NT church members worship the Lord in spirit and truth, rather than in public display of the externalization of OT worship. OT sacrifices were physical and external, whereas NT sacrifices are spiritual

and internal. NT worship in the assembly is internal whereas OT worship of the state religion was external. NT worship comes from the heart without necessary outward display (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15-16).

## II. EXAMINE

*Examine all things* (I Thes. 5:21; II Cor. 13:5)

NT church members must examine all things in the light of Scripture, rightly dividing the word of God (II Tim. 2:15). This examination shows distinctions between the worship practices of the OT state religion (animal sacrifices, majestic orchestras, etc.) and the NT assembly.

1. The lifting up of holy hands was the gesture of open hands with palms facing recipient to receive the Lord's blessings, not to wave at Him (cf. Ps. 28:2; I Tim. 2:8).
2. The Scripture does not refer to the words "drum" or "drums," therefore, certainly not as a musical instrument in worship. "*Loud cymbals*" (Ps. 150:5) and other orchestra instruments were for public worship for the thousands in the sacral society (Dan. 3:5-10).
3. Cultural instruments must be avoided if their music violates biblical principles for the NT congregations. Melody must drive the music (Eph. 5:19).

## III. AVOID

*Avoid appearance of evil* (I Thes. 5:22)

NT church members must avoid the appearance of evil in all areas including worship. Both the secular world and paganism employ perversion in music and worship, including music and musical instruments and the use of dancing. Worldly and pagan practices must be avoided in a careful and consistent manner. Music does have spiritual bias, and either honors God and dispels the attraction of demons (cf. I Sam. 16:23), or is sensual leading to carnal activity (Ex. 32:17-19).

## IV. NO EXAMPLE

*No example in the NT churches* (Jn. 14:15)

NT church members recognize that there is no example of dancing or playing drums in the NT assembly in Christ's teaching and practice, or in Paul's teaching and practice. Nowhere in the NT do the assembly members ever dance or are ever instructed to dance, nor to play drums. Just as there is no example or teaching concerning baby baptism, there is no teaching concerning dancing or drums in the NT assembly.

## CONCLUSION

NT church members must be WEANED from OT practices and honor the Lord Jesus Christ in NT assembly worship.