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Monika Hümb-Schröder

# DANCE

Biblical view - MANUAL

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The Bible quotations are taken from the New International Version (Great Britain) ©1978 New York International Bible Society except where otherwise noted.

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## PREFACE

Dear readers

The "BANNERS AND FLAGS TRAINING MANUAL" has now been available for more than three years. During this time it has helped many people to better understand the meaning and use of banners and flags from a Biblical perspective and to give informed answers to questions of a critical nature.

I would like to give special thanks to Doris Nitsche. This training manual would have never been published without her constant advice, wealth of ideas and, above all, practical assistance. Doris, you are God's gift to me!

Our flag and dance team, which in the meantime has taken on the name "GloryFight", is now being invited to take part in a wide range of events and to run seminars in an ever increasing number of locations. Encouraged by these developments, it seemed appropriate to now add another chapter to the training manual specifically on the subject of "BIBLICAL DANCE".

If you research this subject on the Internet, you will quickly realise that there are many different interpretations and opinions concerning "biblical dance". Therefore I have taken the time to study the Bible myself in detail. The result is this extension to the "Banners and Flags Training Manual".

My desire is that readers will be more amazed than ever how great is our God, in his wisdom, his glory and majesty, and to express this reverential awe with their whole bodies before God.

For Jesus, the Messiah, the only One who is worthy to receive all our devotion, worship and praise.

Monika Hümbs-Schröder  
Dusseldorf | March 2016



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## 1. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DANCE?

The Bible tells us much about dance, even though at first glance it does not appear so, simply because we do not find the actual words *dance* and *dancing* so often in the text. To get a complete picture we have to look for other words such as leaping, rejoicing (and being glad), singing, shouting (for joy), playing (tambourine, lyre, harp), trumpet- blowing, celebrating, praising...

The original word in Hebrew often has a much wider meaning and application, and depending on the translation, the action being described can be understood in different ways. English words can only begin to express the full range of meanings encompassed by the Hebrew word! The book by Cordelia Krawczyk: "Lobpreis mit Tamburinen, Tanz, Flaggen und Bannern" ("Praise with tambourines, dancing, flags and banners") was great source material for this summary presentation of the meanings of Hebrew and Greek words in the original texts. The words in English have been based mainly on the New International Version of the Bible. The Amplified Bible (from Marshall Pickering (UK) ©1965 Zondervan Publishing House) has provided additional words in some cases for further clarification of the meaning in the original text.

### Hebrew words

#### **Machowl, Mechowlah :**

Dancing singly or in a group, often in formation or a circle with singing and musical instruments.

Used in: Psalm 87:7, Psalm 149:3, Psalm 150:4, Exodus 15:20, 1 Samuel 18:6, Jeremiah 31:4,13.

#### **Raqad**

Leaping, jumping, dancing wildly.

Used in: 1 Chronicles 15:29, Ecclesiastes 3:4, Joel 2:5.

#### **Karar, Pazaz**

Dancing and twirling with much energy.

Used in: 2 Samuel 6:14,16.

#### **Guwl**

Rejoice and be glad, with singing for joy and twirling around with compassionate feelings.

Used in: 1 Chronicles 16:31, Psalms 9:15, 13:5-6, 35:9, 53:6, 149:2, Isaiah 25:9, 49:13, Habakkuk 3:18, Zephaniah 3:17.

#### **Sachaq**

Celebrate with joy and abandon, playing instruments

Used in: 2 Samuel 6:5,21, 1 Chronicles 13:8, 15:29.

#### **Teruwah**

Shout, blow the trumpets, sound the alarm.

Used in: 2 Samuel 6:15.

#### **Halal**

Thanks and praise, praise with instruments, praise and worship in great numbers!

Used in: 1 Chronicles 16:4, 23:5,30.

### Greek words

#### **Agalliao, Agalliasis**

Rejoice and be glad, with joy and delight, jump for joy in the Spirit.

Used in: Matthew 5:12, Luke 1:14,46-47,



10:21, Acts 2:46, 16:34, Hebrews 1:9,  
Jude 24, Revelation 19:7.

### **Choros**

Dancing in a group, singing in a choir.  
Used in: Luke 15:25.

### **Orcheomai**

Orchestrated or formation dancing.

Used in: Matthew 14:6, Mark 6:22.

From these Hebrew and Greek words we see that they express much more than the word *dance* (or *dancing*) conveys to us in English, and the list is certainly not exhaustive. In this training manual the use of the word *dance* is intended to cover all the different aspects as described above.





## 2. WHY DID THE PEOPLE DANCE?

### 2.1 People danced to celebrate God's victory in their lives

**Genesis 31:27** : "Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps?"

**Exodus 15:20** : "Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing."

**1 Samuel 18:6** : "When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lyres."

**2 Samuel 6:5** : "David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might (sachaq) before the Lord, with castanets, harps, lyres, tambourines, rattles and cymbals." David's celebration was not only because of the joy of bringing the ark to Jerusalem, but also an expression of triumph over his enemies.

**2 Samuel 6:14-16** : "Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing (karar) before the Lord with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets. As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing (pazaz) before the Lord, she despised him in her heart." So the celebration continued not only for

joy and triumph, but at the same time in the sure knowledge that they had again been "made strong" and could challenge the enemy with "shouts" and the "sound of trumpets".

**1 Chronicles 13:8** : "David and all the Israelites were celebrating with all their might (sachaq) before God, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and trumpets."

**1 Chronicles 15:29** : "As the ark of the covenant of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David dancing and celebrating (raqad) ..."

**Psalms 81:1-2** : "Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre." A clear challenge, not to praise our Lord too half-heartedly!

**Psalms 89:15-16** : "Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, Lord. They rejoice in your name all day long; they celebrate your righteousness."

**Luke 10:21** : Return of the 72 disciples. "At that time Jesus, full of joy (agalliao) through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.'"

**Acts 2:46-47** : "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,



praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

**Acts 16:34** : "The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled (*jumped/leaped*) with joy (agalliao) because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole household."

## 2.2 People dance when they are redeemed, rescued or restored

**Isaiah 35:9b-10** : "But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

**Psalms 147** : "Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!"

## 2.3 People danced to celebrate the feasts of the Lord and at other family feasts

**Exodus 23:14-17** : "Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me.

[1] Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. ...

[2] Celebrate the Festival of Harvest with the first-fruits of the crops you sow in your field.

[3] Celebrate the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field.

Three times a year all the men are to

appear before the Sovereign Lord."

**Exodus 5:1** : "Afterwards Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: "Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness."'"

**Luke 15:25** : Return of the prodigal son. "Meanwhile, the elder son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing (choros)."

There is joy and dancing in heaven and on earth when we come home to the Father! A feast for every conversion – every change of heart and mind! Dancing, joy and rejoicing are simply an integral part of celebrations and feasts. The greatest feast of all time will be celebrated at the wedding feast of the Lamb.

**Revelation 19:7** : "Let us rejoice and be glad (agalliao) and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready."

## 2.4 People danced to praise and honour God.

**1 Chronicles 16:4** : "He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to extol, thank, and praise (halal) the Lord, the God of Israel ..."

**1 Chronicles 23:4-5** : David said, "Of these, twenty-four thousand are to be in charge of the work of the temple of the Lord and six thousand are to be officials and judges. Four thousand are to be gatekeepers and **four thousand are to praise the Lord with**





**the musical instruments** I have provided for that purpose.”

**Psalms 68:25-26** : “Your procession, God, has come into view, the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary. In front are the singers, after them the musicians; with them are the young women playing the tambourines.”

**Psalms 87:7** : “As they make music (machowl) they will sing, ‘All my fountains are in you.’”

**Psalms 149:3** : “Let them praise his name with dancing (machowl) and make music to him with tambourine and harp.”

**Psalms 150:4** : “...praise him with tambourine and dancing (machowl), praise him with the strings and pipe...”

**Luke 1:46-47** : Mary’s song. “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices (agalliasis) in God my Saviour...”

## 2.5 People will dance when Israel is restored

**Jeremiah 31:4** : “I will build you up again, and you, Virgin Israel, will be rebuilt. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful.”

**Jeremiah 31:13** : “Then young women will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.”

## 2.6 There will be dancing on the “Day of the Lord” and on the “Day of Judgment”

**Joel 2:5** : The day of the Lord is coming. “They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. With a noise like that of chariots they leap (raqad) over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.”

**Isaiah 30:32** : Judgment on the nations. “Every stroke the Lord lays on them with his punishing club will be to the music of tambourines and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm.”

## 2.7 There will be dancing when sadness comes to an end

**Psalms 30:11-12** : “You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.”

**Ecclesiastes 3:4** : There is a time for everything. “...a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance...”

The Bible also tells of times when joy and dancing will be taken away for a while for the judgment and refining of his people.

**Joel 1:16** : “Has not the food been cut off before our very eyes – joy and gladness from the house of our God?”

**Isaiah 28:4** : “The joyful tambourines are stilled, the noise of the revellers has stopped, the joyful harp is silent.”



However, God is constantly calling us to be joyful:

**Psalm 5:11** : “But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.”

**Matthew 5:12** : “Rejoice and be glad (agalliao), because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

God himself is preparing us for his glory.  
**Jude 24-25** : “To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you

before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore! Amen.”

And there are times when rejoicing does not come easily and will be a sacrifice.

**Psalm 27:6** : “For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.”



King David | Marc Chagall



### 3. WHO DANCED?

**God : Zephaniah 3:17 :** "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."  
Wow! What a statement! God takes such delight in his children that he rejoices and "twirls around them with compassionate feelings (guwl)".

**The king : 2 Samuel 6:14-15 :** "Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets."  
Even in his position as king, David was not ashamed to express his feelings for his Lord in front of all the people of Israel. He sets an example for others.

**The whole house of Israel : 2 Samuel 14-15** (see above and other references).  
Dancing is obviously intended for everyone, and not exclusively reserved for a few people, and there are many different styles of dancing – with a single dancer or with a group in formation or in sequence.

**Those who are redeemed : Isaiah 35:9b-10a :** "But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads." Is not every believer redeemed and rescued? Freed from sin for a life of joy to the glory of God?

**Any and all who praised God :** (review all references in Chapter 2).  
Men and women, young and old, they all praised God. Dancing is not only for

women! In the Bible men as well as women danced, leapt and rejoiced. And age was not a limiting factor!

**All creation : Psalm 65:12-13 :** "The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with corn; they shout for joy and sing."  
**Isaiah 44:23 :** "Sing for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has done this; shout aloud, you earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees..."

If you have it on your heart to go deeper into this subject, look up the following words in a Bible concordance: "joy", "joyful", "rejoice", "rejoices", "rejoiced", "rejoicing". Many Bible references will be listed there for you to study. In each case ask yourself: "who was joyful or rejoicing?" and "why were they joyful or rejoicing?". You will certainly gain further understanding of biblical dance!



(c) Zalman Kleinman



## 4. USING THE GIFT OF DANCE

The Bible is not silent about the inappropriate use of dance. Everything that we receive from God for us to exercise in a responsible way can also be used for purely selfish motives and become impure and unacceptable in his sight. Eating and drinking to excess can lead to addiction. Every material possession can take centre-stage in our lives. Even the gift of preaching and teaching can be used to gain recognition for oneself. Our misuse of words and relationships can have harmful and destructive consequences.

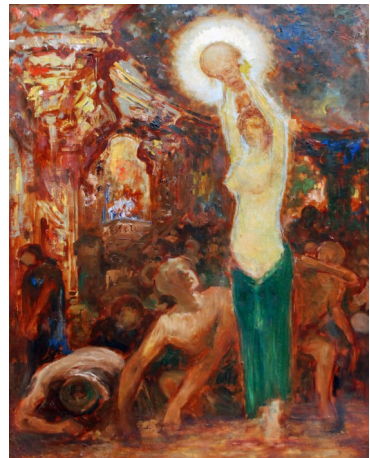
### The incorrect way to use dance

We find the first good example in Exodus 32:19 where the people danced around the golden calf. In this case it is clear that God, the Lord, was not the focal point of their worship and an idol had taken his place.

Another example is found in Isaiah 5:12 where we read: "They have harps and lyres at their banquets, pipes and tambourines and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands." Here also it is clear that the one true God was not the focus of their celebrations and their entire thoughts and intentions were directed at themselves. In the New Testament we find in Matthew 14:6 and Mark 6:22 the dance of Salome in front of Herod. This pleased him so much that he said he would give her anything she asked for. Prompted by her mother she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Here also it is clear that right from the start the dance was not intended to praise God, but as a means to manipulate the man Herod.

In 1 Corinthians 10:7 we are warned not to be idolaters.

I think that it is important and worth noting that God in his Word desires our praise and worship – he calls us to rejoice, to celebrate, to be joyful and to dance. To my knowledge there is no place in the Bible which would tell us that, because of the possible abuses, dance (and all that this word can imply) is not indeed desired by God.



Salome | Gustave Moreau

### The correct way to use dance

Our dance should be a sincere expression of our love for God, otherwise it will soon become an eye-catching performance or just another show. Our relationship to God and our devotion to HIM form the basis for each and every worship dance. In fact I often find it helpful to ask myself the question: what is actually going through the hearts and minds of those who are watching the worship dance?



Such "hallowed" dance is an expression of joy and reverence before God with an obedient and humble heart as the Holy Spirit's leads. Our dancing is an act of love for Jesus (see John 12:1-8 : the anointing of Jesus' feet) and it generates in us the power to deepen our desire to know HIM better and gives us a new revelation of who HE really is.

In the same way, praise and worship are also an expression of love for God, but all our worship, singing and dancing are worthless without obedience to his teaching in every area of our lives! In John Chapter 14 Jesus mentions this to his disciples several times:

Verse 15: If you love me, keep my commands.

Verse 21: Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.

Verse 23: Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. Verse 24: Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.

There is a warning in the Bible that always stirs my conscience:

**Amos 5:21-24** : I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me.

Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! Our innermost thoughts, feelings and attitudes should not be treated lightly. We must stand before God in all honesty and sincerity and call out to him:

**Psalms 26:2** : Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind!

## 5. STYLES OF DANCE

There are as many different styles of dance as there are languages.

However styles of worship dancing can be broadly categorised as "free style" or "choreographed".

### Free style dance

... is not rehearsed. It often flows spontaneously and is led by the Holy Spirit. Either one person dances alone or there are a number of dancers who follow the movements of the lead dancer as they are all guided by the Holy Spirit.

### Choreographed dance

... is a rehearsed dance sequence, either by one person or by a group of dancers. I personally do not share the view that free style dancing is more Holy Spirit led than choreographed dancing. God determines the best use of the dancers' gifts and the style of dance for each individual circumstance.





## 6. THOUGHTS ON DANCE AND OUR PHYSICAL BODIES

### Honouring God with our physical bodies

In the New Testament we are encouraged more than once to honour God with our whole bodies.

**Romans 12:1-2** : "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."

**1 Corinthians 3:17b** : "...for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple."

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** : "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies."

When we are called upon to use our entire bodies to honour God, this certainly means more than just dancing. But dance is a gift from God by which he can touch us personally and draw us into his presence – and through us touch and stir the hearts of others.

**Acts 17:28a** : "For in him we live and move and have our being."

Amongst other things we are called to reflect the beauty of God, his greatness, glory, his whole being. Not while we are so

brilliant, but because we have been entrusted with the task of being his ambassadors. (**2 Corinthians 5:20a** : "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...") Our living relationship with God is at the centre of all we do, and this makes the difference between our worship dance and other forms of dancing! And in line with this, how we dance and how we dress should be pleasing to watch yet appropriate in every way to give all the glory to God.

### Perception of dance in our culture – in the past and now

At this point I want to mention that in our western Christian culture there have been very divergent views and opinions about dancing and they still exist today. Since 200 CE many Christian theologians have condemned dancing as a vestige from heathen religions. The physical body was considered intrinsically as bad; only the spirit of a person was good. From this way of thinking, the body needed to be disciplined and kept in "check". This hostility towards our bodies has remained to some extent in our thinking and culture to this day and often still influences our attitudes. Nevertheless, despite great resistance to dancing in earlier centuries, the practice of dance did appear again in some parts of the Catholic Church.

In a nuns' tale from the Middle Ages there are many reports of dancing with "mystical" joy. The Carmelite Maria says: "I had such a vibrant spirit in me that I was jumping as I walked, so much so that people would have said that I was crazy if they had seen me."

The tambourine of Teresa of Avila is still to be seen in the San Jose Cloister in Avila.



“Clerics used to dance a “resurrection dance” in the corridors of Gothic cathedrals during the Easter Sunday service.” (© “Sakrales Tanzen”, Judith Hardegger, Pfarrblatt, Katholik Kirche Kanton Zurich.)

Dance is a powerful language which cannot be silenced for long when people want to express their relationship to God. We have been created by God with this natural way of expressing ourselves. We may and should exercise this gift of dance with all humility, purity and wisdom and in a very close relationship with our Lord.



Ancient Tamburines



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geschlossene Türen



geöffnete Türen



Detailansicht: Ein Fisch



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Monika Huembs-Schroeder

Born 1961 | married | three adult children

Monika Huembs-Schroeder has been a Christian since 1989 and is a member of a free evangelical church in Germany along with her husband. She was for many years engaged in children's and youth work leadership.



Through working with children, God taught and trained her in many different ways – to listen to HIS voice, to serve as part of a team, in creativity, to lead a team, in intercession, ... Her current involvement in the meaning of banners and flags has also been a continuing development and maturing process. Banners and flags are for Monika Huembs-Schroeder a pleasing and attractive way to express her praise, worship and reverence for HIM.

All the banners and flags as well as many other artistic items are made by the author herself. "I was no seamstress at the beginning, but God gave me the skill, patience and creativity that I needed. In designing and making the creative works, I became connected in worship and prayer to my Father in heaven. Then I felt that my calling to make God known through banners and flags was definitely confirmed. My motivation is only to honour the name of Jesus to his glory."

In addition to custom banner and flag making, she is now sharing her experiences in ministry with her flag dance team in international seminars.



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GloryFight Dance

# GloryFight

**gooding** Dein Beitrag zählt.

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Israelische Tänze