

1 CORINTHIANS 14-16 WOMEN PREACHING? THE RESURRECTION CHAPTER



We now continue with 1 Cor. 14. Regarding the speaking of tongues (or of different languages), the *subsequent history* of the Corinthian Church shows *they soon ceased to possess this gift*—perhaps due to their abuse of it or because it was no longer needed. Paul himself said that the gift of tongues “will cease” (1 Cor. 13:8). Remember, no other Church is mentioned by the apostles as having received this collective gift of speaking in different languages.

Thankfully, it appears God will solve the world’s multiple-tongues communications problem during the Millennium, when He removes the curse upon mankind after defiantly building the Tower of Babel. Then all of humanity will be able to speak a single and pure language. As Zephaniah 3:9 says, “For then I will *restore* to the peoples *a pure language*, that they *all* may *call on the name of the Eternal*, to serve Him *with one accord*.” Our *Beyond Today Bible Commentary* mentions, “Zephaniah 3:9 describes God providing a ‘pure language’ for the peoples of the earth, *much better suited for praising and serving God*. Today’s languages are filled with pagan references and other ungodly elements. That won’t be so *in the language of the future*.”

Women preaching at Church

The next issue Paul addresses is that some women wanted to “preach” in the Church. Under God’s inspiration, Paul instructs them, “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to *speak* (the Gk. term *laleo* is equivalent to *speaking authoritative or preaching*, as it says of God in vs. 21 and Heb. 1:1); but they are to be submissive, as the law also says [referring to the principle established by God in Gen. 3:16, that the woman is to be subject to her husband]. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to *speak* [Gk. *laleo*--preach] in church. Or did the word of God *come originally from you*? Or was it *you only* that it *reached*?” (1 Cor. 14:34-36).

On this last verse, *The BK Commentary* says, “The Corinthian believers were *not* to think of themselves as *exclusive, independent interpreters or recipients of the Word of God*. They, like those in all the congregations, were to *submit* to God’s truth *by conforming to this standard of conduct*.”

Paul also adds in 1 Tim. 2:11-12: “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not

permit a woman to teach or *to have authority over a man*, but to be in silence.” Therefore, women preaching in Church is illegitimate and contrary to God’s law, nor for there to be “female pastors” in the Church, or for women to assume ministerial titles and thereby “exercise authority” over men.

Besides, there are many biblical examples of renowned women who faithfully served God and were leaders without needing a ministerial title. One ordained role women can fulfill is that of a deaconess (Rom. 16:1), a responsibility to assist the pastor with mainly physical aspects in the Church. Paul concludes this section on spiritual gifts and the distinct roles of each member within the congregation with this admonition, “So, brothers and sisters, desire to speak *what God has revealed*, and don’t keep anyone from speaking in other languages. Everything must be done in a proper and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:39-40, GW).

The resurrection of the dead

Another local issue facing the Church in Corinth was that some were doubting the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. As Paul asks: “Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, *how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead*?” (1 Cor. 15:12).

Therefore, Paul must refute this heresy, and in this chapter 15, called *the Resurrection Chapter*, he explains the doctrine about the resurrection of the dead. He says: “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen *by Cephas* [Peter], then by the twelve. After that He *was seen by over five hundred brethren at once*, of whom *the greater part remain to the present but some have fallen asleep* [have died]. After that He was seen *by James*, then *by all the apostles*. Then last of all *He was seen by me* also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (1 Cor. 15:1-9).

Paul records the great number of eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ--over *500 of them!* Many were still alive after some thirty years since the event. Paul said if anyone doubts it, they can still find *hundreds of credible eyewitnesses* that would come forward to testify *independently* of this truth. That is why Jesus' resurrection is *so compelling*.

Now, by believing in the resurrection of Jesus, we can then be certain that one day *we will also rise from the dead*. As Paul says: "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, *then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty*. Yes, and we are found *false witnesses* of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And *if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!* Then also those who have *fallen asleep in Christ have perished*" (1 Cor. 15:12-18).

As Paul explains, the belief in Christ's resurrection is the foundation of our faith. Note also that those who die are "sleeping" and not conscious at all nor do they have an immortal soul.

Furthermore, the dead will not be resurrected at the same time, but there is *an orderly sequence of resurrections*. As he says: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and *has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*. For since by man came death, by Man [Jesus] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so *in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits*, afterward *those who are Christ's at His coming*. Then *comes the end*, when He *delivers the kingdom to God the Father*, when He *puts an end to all rule and all authority and power*. For *He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet*. The last enemy that will be destroyed *is death*" (1 Cor. 15:20-26).

The term for "order" here is *tagma* in Greek and means "arranged in an orderly manner" (*Word Study Dictionary*). Paul had in mind that Jesus will call forth each person to be resurrected according to the chronological order God the Father has ordained. The first to be resurrected from the dead was *Jesus Himself*—who is called "the firstfruits."

This refers to the first sheaf of the harvest presented before God in the Temple and once accepted, the remainder of the crop could then be threshed. Thus, He is called, "the firstborn of many brethren" in Rom. 8:29 and "the firstborn from the dead" in Rev. 1:5. His resurrection served as the *initial guarantee* of the harvests yet to come.

Thus, once Jesus is the resurrected firstfruits, the rest of the resurrection corresponds to "those who are Christ's at His coming." This also rules out the theory of the immortality of the soul, for we see that no one has been resurrected thus far to a new life except Jesus. As John 3:13 says, "*No one has ascended to heaven* but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." This confirms that neither Mary nor the so-called saints are in heaven; rather, they remain dead until Christ resurrects them. It is Christ who will awaken everyone in His own due time (see John 5:25-28).

Paul says of *a period* during which Christ "must reign." This includes *the Millennium* [one thousand years] (Rev. 20:4-6) and then what he calls "the end." It refers to *the time following the Millennium*, encompassing the Second Resurrection, when most human beings will be judged (Rev. 20:11-12) and, at its conclusion is the Third Resurrection (Rev. 20:13-15), "when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father...For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:24).

So, when everything sinful has been destroyed in the lake of fire, "both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up...nevertheless we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:10-13). When this occurs and all things have been purified, God the Father will descend from the third heaven with the resplendent New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-3). Paul explains: "Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). Finally, God the Father will be administratively over all things, and thus righteousness, love, and peace will reign forever.

Baptism for the hope of the dead

Paul then gives a reason for believing in such resurrections, "Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm,

by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:29-31).

The key term to understand this scripture is the preposition "for" (Gk. *hyper*), a broad term that can mean "the aim, purpose or objective of an action" (*Word Study Dictionary*). It is used in Phil. 2:13 in this way, "God worketh in you both to will and to do 'for the realization' [or goal] of His good pleasure" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*). This "for" carries that specific sense of calling us "for the realization or goal" that God can award us His kingdom (Luke 12:32). In other words, Paul is asking: What is the point of being baptized if there is *no goal or hope for the resurrection of the dead*? Incidentally, Mormons distort this verse to teach baptism on behalf of their dead ancestors. The Bible clearly shows, prior to being baptized, a person must repent of their own sins (Acts 2:38). The dead cannot repent and so no one can be baptized on their behalf. Therefore, this Mormon teaching constitutes a false doctrine.

Paul then proceeds to explain *the nature of the resurrection itself*. "But someone will ask: 'How are the dead raised? *With what kind of body will they come?*'" (1 Cor. 15:36).

To explain this, Paul uses *three analogies*:

(1.) That of *a seed planted*. He says, "Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but *mere grain*—perhaps wheat or some other grain" (1 Cor. 15:36-37). Upon dying and being buried, the human body is like a sown seed; when it is resurrected, it will have a glorious new body.

(2.) The second analogy deals with *different body types* among living creatures, and in the resurrection, God will grant each person *a spiritual body type*. (3.) The third comparison is of *celestial bodies*—the moon, sun and stars—which have various degrees of brilliance and so the resurrected body will shine like the stars (Dan. 12:3; Mt. 13:43).

Paul continues: "The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second Man, who is the Lord, is from heaven... And just as we have borne the image of the earthy man, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren: that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, nor does *corruption inherit incorruption*" (1 Cor. 15:47-50). So, in the Bible, salvation is *in two stages*: it *begins* with our *baptism* and *culminates* in our *resurrection*—which constitutes being "born again"

into the kingdom of God. Paul then explains how the resurrection from flesh to spirit will occur, "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O Hades [the grave], where is your victory?' *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law*. But thanks be to God, who gives us *the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:51-58).

Then, in *chapter 16*, Paul deals with the offering to the Jerusalem Church and says: "Now concerning *the collection for the saints*, you should follow the directions I gave to the churches in Galatia. *After the Sabbath ends*, each of you should *set aside* ['in your home' (NMB)] and *save something from your surplus in proportion to what you have*, so that *no collections will have to be made when I arrive*. When I arrive, I will send letters *along with the men you approve* to take *your gift to Jerusalem*" (1 Cor. 16:1-3).

Tragically, this innocent passage has been used by Sunday-keepers as a proof text the Corinthian brethren were *meeting on a Sunday* and *taking up a collection*, but *that is clearly not what the text says*.

First, the phrase "on the first day of the week" is in the Greek, "*kata mian sabbatou*" or "After the Sabbath," and not Sunday. He says *after the Sabbath* they could work to store their goods (like grains) *in their homes* so they could be quickly collected by Paul and sent to the Jerusalem brethren facing a great drought (see Acts 11:28-30). Robertson adds that the Gk. *heautoi thesaurizon* means storing goods "by himself, at his home," and *not* the Church.

Paul then ends the epistle mentioning his travel plans and mentioning where he was staying, "In the meantime, I will be staying *here at Ephesus* until the *Festival of Pentecost*" (1 Cor. 16:8, NLT). This shows Paul was still keeping God's Feasts and marked his time according to the biblical Hebrew Calendar.