



Anna Wyner, Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost—Our Lady in the midst of the Apostles, 1988, mosaic, Basilica of Our Lady, Walsingham. Photo by Lawrence OP. Image via Flickr.

# 1 CORINTHIANS 14–16

## THE CORINTHIANS' QUESTIONS & PAUL'S ANSWERS

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### Introduction

Paul returns to the gifts of the Spirit to discuss a problem with the gift of tongues. Next, he gives the most in-depth study of the Atonement of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Paul finishes with Church business, including the financial offerings, his travel plans, and personal greetings to friends in Corinth.<sup>2</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 14—Final Teachings on the Gifts of the Spirit

*The gift of prophecy is preferable to tongues—1 Cor 14:1–19*

**1 Cor 14:1 (NR).** “*Seek after love and strive for spiritual gifts, and especially that you might speak with divine inspiration.*” Paul prioritizes love, or charity, in seeking spiritual gifts. Note that most translations replace the KJV “but” with “and” since the gift of prophecy is also a gift of the Spirit.

Paul prefers the gift of prophecy to the showier gift of tongues. In the New Testament, *propheteuo*, “to foretell, tell forth,” is defined in Rev 19:10: “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Paul’s definition of the gift of prophecy is consistent with John’s. It is not a gift just for Apostles and prophets but is for all disciples who foster a testimony of Jesus’s divinity. This aspect of the Spirit’s influence was especially important to Paul.

**1 Cor 14:2 (JST).** “*For he that speaketh in ~~an unknown~~ another tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God.*” Six times in this chapter, the JST replaced “unknown” with “another,” communicating that God knows all languages, even if humans do not. (These are the only JST changes in the first thirty-three verses). The Prophet Joseph Smith printed a similar warning against tongues (glossolalia) in an editorial dated June 15, 1842, for the *Times and Seasons*:

The gift of tongues is the smallest gift perhaps of the whole, and yet it is one that is the most sought after. . . .

. . . Be not so curious about tongues, do not speak in tongues except there be an interpreter present; the ultimate design of tongues is to speak to foreigners, and if persons are very anxious to display their intelligence, let them speak to such in their own tongues. The gifts of God are all useful in their place, but when they are applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare, and a curse instead of a blessing.<sup>3</sup>

Cautionary counsel is repeated by prophets because the gift of tongues is easily counterfeited by the devil.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Smith believed that God gave the gift of tongues mainly to bless foreign missionaries, not those seeking a dramatic display: “The gift of the tongues, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the Church, is for the benefit of the servants of God to preach to unbelievers.”<sup>5</sup>

**1 Cor 14:3–4 (NIV).** “*the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort . . . [and] edifies the church.*” Paul asks the Saints to seek the gift of prophecy to build and edify the members. The Corinthian Saints had a problem with order and reverence in their meetings. Paul describes chaotic meetings, with people speaking or praying at the same time. Furthermore, speaking in tongues without an interpreter sounded like “gibberish” (14:11 NEB). Their insensitive behaviors offended the Spirit and did not edify. This may have been a result of some becoming inebriated from drinking too much sacrament wine (see 1 Cor 11:20).

**1 Cor 14:12.** “*as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*” This is good advice on which gifts of the Spirit we seek as well as which education, career development, and hobbies we choose. It is better to grow in areas that can help to build the kingdom of God.

**1 Cor 14:15–16 (NIV).** “*I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise . . . how can someone else . . . say ‘Amen.’*” Paul asks the Saints to dedicate their group prayers, singing, and speaking for edification.



**1 Cor 14:18–19 (NIV).** *“I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church, I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.”* Paul clarifies that he did not speak in tongues in church without an interpreter. Joseph Smith and his followers were known by their contemporaries for speaking in tongues and practicing the gifts of the Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

*Gift of tongues: A sign for unbelievers—1 Cor 14:20–25*

**1 Cor 14:20 (NIV).** *“Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.”* In Paul’s corrections, he addressed both men and women (not just men, as the KJV reads), saying they both needed to speak in a way to offer understanding.

**1 Cor 14:22 (NIV).** *“Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers.”* Paul’s summary of the gift of tongues echoes its use on Pentecost (Act 2:11). He promoted the gift of prophecy or testimony for more mature Christians.

*Edification and orderliness in public worship—1 Cor 14:26–33*

**1 Cor 14:26–33 (NIV).** *“brothers and sisters . . . Everything must be done so that the church may be built up . . . speak, one at a time. . . . For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.”* Paul’s rule for worship services is order and edification. The situation sounds much like the revivals in America during the Second Great Awakening (1801–1840). This counsel also speaks to the devil’s consistent effort to deafen us to the Spirit and counterfeit God’s gifts.

*Ransacked text on women’s public worship—1 Cor 14:34–35*

**1 Cor 14:34–35.** *“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”* These two puzzling verses contradict Paul’s previous support of women. Within the same epistle, Paul encouraged women’s participation in public worship at least five times—some just a few verses earlier:

- “You can all prophesy” (14:31 NIV)
- “Sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues” (14:39 NIV)
- “the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort” (14:3 NIV)
- “Women [are] consecrated in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all” (1:2 WNT)
- “Every woman who prays and prophesies” in public worship (11:2, 5)

Additionally, in this epistle, we see Paul's positive encouragement of women in church service when he

- encouraged women to exercise the gifts of the Spirit (12:1, 6–7, 11),
- included women as baptized members to serve in the church (12:13–14),
- mentioned Chloe as a source of information and a trusted witness (1:11), and
- spoke of women as equals to men (1 Cor 10:1–2; 11:5, 12:1–12; 14:31).<sup>7</sup>

In this epistle, from the first greeting to the last goodbye, Paul's advice on building the kingdom includes women. Likewise, twelve more times in Paul's other epistles he encourages women to participate, learn, testify, and serve in church services.<sup>8</sup> (Gender differences in the Greek text are best seen in the NIV.)

**What was the problem?** As we do not know the question or specific issue here, we have to wonder whether these two verses referred to a specific problem. Could they be a tangential thought that fit into the broader section of 1 Corinthians' discussion on disorderly conduct in meetings? It is possible that because the Greek and Jewish cultures restricted many women in their public worship, perhaps the social freedom newly found in Christianity incited some women to speak or act beyond propriety (or at least beyond the previous norm). Were Corinthian women interrupting the meetings with questions? A few verses earlier, Paul instructs Church members to listen respectfully when someone else was speaking (1 Cor 14:30). Or was this a particular type of meeting? Or were these verses added to the text later by an editor? Possibly, these words may have been a quote from the Corinthians' question (just as Paul quoted their statement earlier in 1 Cor 7:1). Was Paul writing sarcastically? Not knowing the circumstances inhibits our full understanding.

**Out of context.** These two demeaning verses are out of context. The entire section is about spiritual gifts, and this specific portion is about tongues and prophecy (1 Cor 12–14). In the Greek text, Paul encourages both genders to use the gifts of the Spirit. Then, in 1 Cor 14:34 and 35, we find an abrupt and radical change silencing women in public. These two verses stand out like a sore thumb in glaring opposition to Paul's previous chapters of positive encouragement of women's participation. Paul includes twenty references to women's involvement in public worship.<sup>9</sup> When textual critics note a break in the flow of Paul's thought, they often theorize that an editor added something to the original text. In fact, just after these two verses, the text continues with the context of spiritual gifts and *again calls women to speak in church!* "My brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy" (1 Cor 14:39 NIV).

Furthermore, one of the older trusted Greek manuscripts of this epistle does not include these troubling passages. Other ancient texts move these two verses to the end of the chapter so that they do not interrupt the flow. Certain words are different in each Greek text.<sup>10</sup> From the earliest days, these verses are absent or did not seem to fit. There is nothing in our Old Testament that claims this gender restriction. Yet, this focus is consistent with the traditions of the Pharisees and others at the time.

**Other translations.** Other translations shed light on this passage. In an alternative interpretation by John W. Welch, we find more sensitive wording: "Women should be reverent and not chatter but be supportive."<sup>11</sup> Other reputable English translations do not resolve the blatant conflict of messages.

Table 1. Comparison of 1 Cor 14:34–35 in the JST, WEB, and JB

JST	WEB	JB
Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to <i>spea</i> <i>k rule</i> ; but <i>they are commanded</i> to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to <i>spea</i> <i>k rule</i> in the church.	Let your wives keep silent in the assemblies, for it has not been permitted for them to be talking; except in submission, as the law also says. If they desire to learn anything, “Let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for a wife to be talking in the assembly.”	Women are to remain quiet in the assemblies, since they have no permission to speak: theirs is a subordinate part, as the Law itself says. If there is anything they want to know, they should ask their husbands at home: it is shameful for a woman to speak in the assembly.

The JST modified the meaning entirely by changing “speak” to “rule,” transforming the discussion from one of speaking to one of authority.<sup>12</sup> Was the problem that women usurped authority? Were they correcting the presiding elder? This epistle discusses authority repeatedly. With the perspective of the JST change, it seems as though Paul had a particular kind of ruling in mind. The JST also took out the word “command.” This makes the phrase closer to the Greek, which uses a “passive voice with the imperative construction.” The Greek text does not command the women but asks them to “willingly yield themselves to the law and church practice.”<sup>13</sup>

**Possibly an editorial addition.** The most convincing explanation to me is that perhaps these two verses were not written by Paul at all but were added by a later editor, as suggested by the Greek scholar Gordon D. Fee.<sup>14</sup> It does not seem plausible that Paul would contradict himself within the same section of the same letter. These two verses also match the views of the Jewish Pharisees and heretical Christians from the end of the first century.<sup>15</sup> I too assume they were added by a later copyist.

**Restored Church on women speaking.** The restored Church of Christ allows women to speak, teach, counsel, testify, exhort, administer, and serve as priestesses. Women may prophesy and pray in their church services, public gatherings, homes, and temples. Joseph Smith revealed that women should be called and set apart, or “ordained . . . to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by [God’s] Spirit” (D&C 25:7). Additionally, the Restoration honors Eve and believes in a Heavenly Mother. However, women do not preside or rule over priesthood leaders, as the JST says.

**Summary.** The Apostolic Church battled great diversity that affected the Saints’ ability to accept and live Jesus’s teachings. In the Epistles, we find evidence that the Saints struggled with keeping doctrine pure—including accepting women as equal participants in worship. We find passages in which

the Apostles tried to clarify and teach the principles and ordinances that Christ taught. However, in the currently available New Testament translations, we also find statements that contradict the Lord's teachings regarding women's worship. The vast majority of the Epistles encourage Christian women to join in public worship. Specifically, in all of 1 Corinthians, except these two verses, Paul encourages women to fully participate and draw on the power of heaven by joining public prayer, prophecy, and expressing the gifts of the Spirit.

### *Concluding remarks on gifts of the Spirit—1 Cor 14:36–40*

**1 Cor 14:36 (BSB).** *“Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?”* The text returns to the context of 1 Cor 14:32, discussing prophesying at church. As an Apostle, Paul felt strongly about who could speak for God and cautioned others. He also understood and witnessed of the Spirit, hoping the Saints would hear the still, small voice.

**1 Cor 14:37.** *“If any man think himself to be a prophet, . . . acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”* Paul asks the Corinthians who claimed the spiritual gift of prophecy to acknowledge that Paul's writing was a divine commandment.

**1 Cor 14:39–40 (NIV).** *“my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”* Paul heartily encouraged men and women to prophesy—which was defined as sharing testimony of Jesus (Rev 19:10). This counsel is repeated in the restored Church (see D&C 88:119).

## **1 Corinthians 15—Doctrine of the Resurrection**

Some philosophies taught that there would be no physical resurrection. To combat this, Paul offers the Bible's longest defense of the Savior's physical resurrection.

### *Christ's Resurrection—1 Cor 15:1–11*

**1 Cor 15:1 (BSB).** *“I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you.”* Paul reminded the Corinthians that he had preached the message of the gospel and they had received its saving message.

**1 Cor 15:3–5 (BSB).** *“that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas and then to the Twelve.”* The repeated use of the Greek word *hoti*, “that” (used four times), identifies a statement of belief or fact. This is the oldest account we have in biblical text of Jesus's Passion and Resurrection (most scholars agree the Gospels were written after the first of the Epistles). It was probably a hymn or summary passed onto Paul that he recited from memory. Paul expresses his belief that Jesus's death was part of God's plan. Jesus had to die for our sins. Paul stresses four important doctrines:

- Christ died for our sins (also taught in 1 Cor 5:7; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 3:24–26; Isa 53:12; and many times in the Book of Mormon—see note 1).
- Christ was buried (fulfilling Isa 53:9).
- Christ was raised (15:4), written in the Greek perfect tense meaning “Jesus is alive evermore.”<sup>16</sup>
- Christ appeared in His resurrected body to many.

Early Christian fathers had members recite these verses at baptisms and on Sundays. In AD 325, these four ideas were lengthened and systematized in the Nicene Creed when Roman priests and politicians adopted and adapted Christianity as the empire’s religion.

**1 Cor 15:4. “he was buried.”** In the early Church, the baptismal ordinance symbolized Jesus’s death. A newly converted Christian stepped down into the water, symbolizing Jesus’s burial. The individual’s immersion represented Jesus’s time in the tomb. The convert then rose out of the water clean, a new person, symbolizing the Lord’s Resurrection on Easter morning.

**1 Cor 15:5 (BSB). “He appeared to Cephas and then to the Twelve.”** Paul reports that Jesus first appeared to Simon Peter, or Cephas (which in Aramaic means “rock”), before the ten Apostles. According to textual scholars, Paul’s record was written closest to the time of Jesus’s Resurrection. This account is consistent with Luke’s list of Christ’s visits after the Resurrection (Lk 24:34). Paul’s record does not negate Jn 20, which describes Jesus’ first appearance to Mary Magdala at His tomb. Each Gospel shares different details.

**1 Cor 15:6 (NIV). “he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time.”** Paul reminds his audience that the resurrected Jesus appeared in His body after His forty-day ministry to over five hundred people. Christ called women to witness, even though Judaic legal courts did not allow it. Paul may have heard this account from Peter during their fifteen days together in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18). The euphemism “fallen asleep” communicates a hope in the Resurrection.

**1 Cor 15:7–8. “he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also.”** This James was the half-brother of Jesus (who later became a bishop or leader in Jerusalem; Act 15:13). That Paul uses “last” should not negate additional eyewitnesses of Jesus’s physical resurrection—including the 2,600 at the temple in Bountiful and other prophets and disciples across the world to whom He has appeared.

**1 Cor 15:10. “by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain.”** “Grace” here also can be translated “forgiveness, merciful kindness.” Paul claims to have worked harder than anyone else, which he perhaps did because he felt he needed more forgiveness as a former persecutor.

**1 Cor 15:11 (NIV). “this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.”** From Paul’s perspective, belief in Christ’s physical resurrection was the foundation of Christianity.

### *The resurrection of the dead—1 Cor 15:12–28*

**1 Cor 15:12.** “*how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*” Paul denounces those who believe that Jesus was not physically resurrected. He supports his thesis that God’s plan of salvation includes the resurrection of the body with six if-then statements.

**1 Cor 15:20.** “*now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*” Jesus’s Resurrection becomes our guarantee that we, too, will rise from the dead with immortal bodies.

**1 Cor 15:21.** “*since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*” Paul contrasts Adam and Jesus using parallel construction. Adam represents the mortal father of humanity, and Jesus represents the father of immortal life. Adam assisted in the Creation as Michael, and now Jesus leads the new creation (see Col 1:18; Rev 1:5). In Hebrew, Adam can be singular, meaning “man,” or plural, meaning “humanity” (1 Cor 15:21). In verse 22, Paul uses the singular name to clarify exactly what he is teaching.

**1 Cor 15:23.** “*every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.*” The phrase “His coming” appears thirty-eight times in the standard works. We do not find “Second Coming” until Justin Martyr in AD 150, and only once does it appear in modern scriptures (D&C 34:6).

**1 Cor 15:24.** “*he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*” This verse does a great job of describing how God the Father and the Son are separate beings but work together. The temporary usurper, Satan, claims to rule but ultimately will be bound in the Millennium (Rev 20:6–13).

**1 Cor 15:25.** “*he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*” After His coming, Jesus will reign and have all power in His control, including power over death, as mortals will be “twinkled” during the Millennium. Paul cites ideas from Ps 8:6 and 110:1 and repeats these ideas two verses later.

### *Baptisms for the dead—1 Cor 15:29–34*

**1 Cor 15:29.** “*Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?*” Paul continues to give logical evidence of the physical resurrection by turning to the practice of baptism for the dead. The Resurrection would not be universal unless the dead who passed on without a knowledge of Jesus had the opportunity to accept Him (most Christians believe in a limited Atonement since they do not understand proxy work for the dead).

Ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cults had rituals for their dead. They took food to burial places for the dead to eat. Egyptian tombs also had other items for the afterlife. Some Christians who celebrate All Saints’ Day believe that the saints come to put the dead back in their graves.

The Prophet Joseph Smith expounded on this verse in 1842:



What is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times. (D&C 128:18)

This fits seamlessly with the plan of salvation and Restoration teachings of the nature of God (see Rom 2:11).

**1 Cor 15:31. “I protest.”** Other translations read, “I swear it by my pride in you, my brothers—for in Christ Jesus our Lord I am proud of you” (NEB) and “I mean that, brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord” (NIV). The JST clarifies this verse by adding the context of Jesus’s Resurrection, giving it a whole new meaning:

#### KJV

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

#### JST

I protest ~~by your~~ *unto you the resurrection of the dead; and this is my* rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord *daily, though* I die *daily*.

**1 Cor 15:32. “If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.”** Strong’s Concordance explains that the Greek for “beasts” has a figurative meaning also: “I am exposed to fierce hostility.”<sup>17</sup> As a Roman citizen, Paul would not have literally fought wild beasts in a colosseum. Paul uses reverse logic to make his point. Colloquially he says, “I wouldn’t be trying so hard as a missionary if there were no resurrection.”

**1 Cor 15:33 (ESV). “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’”** Paul quotes a Greek comedy (Menander’s *Thais*) as a warning to his audience to avoid wicked associations (or “bad friends,” JB). The Spirit works best when we are pure.

**1 Cor 15:34 (NIV). “Come back to your senses as you ought.”** No names are mentioned, but Paul probably had a specific group in mind. He then calls the whole congregation to “sin no more” (NRSV).

#### *Resurrected body—1 Cor 15:35–39*

**1 Cor 15:35 (BSB). “But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?’”** Paul now turns to a second part of the Corinthians’ questions, now addressing the timing and nature of the Resurrection. He responds with an example from the law of the harvest: a seed will produce the same kind of plant that it came from. Animals likewise reproduce their own kind. In verse 36, “quicken” means “to come to life again or be resurrected.”

## *The kingdoms in heaven—1 Cor 15:40–55*

**1 Cor 15:40.** “**There are also celestial bodies.**” Paul explains that there are different states in the Resurrection or heavens. He repeats these thoughts in 2 Cor 12. In the Restoration we learn more of these celestial bodies as part of the afterlife (D&C 76:70–98 ). The JST adds a third name to describe the three degrees of glory (the change parallels Paul’s list of the sun, moon, and stars in the next verse).

### **KJV**

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies  
terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one,  
and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

### **JST**

~~There are a~~Also celestial bodies, and bodies  
terrestrial, ~~and bodies~~ *telestial*; but the glory  
of the celestial ~~is~~, one; and the ~~glory of the~~ ter-  
restrial ~~is~~, another; ~~and the~~ *telestial, another*.

The apostolic father Papias (ca. 60–130) explained, “As the elders say, . . . those who have been thought worthy of spending their time in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delight of paradise, and others shall possess the brightness of the city; for in every place shall the Saviour be seen, as they shall be worthy who see him. And that this is the difference of the habitation of those who bring forth a hundred-fold and those who bring forth sixty-fold . . . thirty-fold.”<sup>18</sup>

**1 Cor 15:42–43 (BLB).** “**So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in decay; it is raised in immortality. . . . It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.**” Even though human bodies die on earth, God’s plan graciously allows all to rise with Him in incorruption and power.

**1 Cor 15:44.** “**it is raised a spiritual body.**” We read more on the resurrection of spiritual bodies in D&C 88:28–31: “They who are of a celestial spirit shall receive the same body which was a natural body; even ye shall receive your bodies, and your glory shall be that glory by which your bodies are quickened.”

**1 Cor 15:45–47.** “**The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.**” Paul again draws parallels between Adam and Jesus (as in 1 Cor 15:21). God created the physical body for Adam (or in Hebrew, both “man” and “mankind”) from the elements of the earth (Gen 1:26; 2:7). Paul refers to Jesus as the second man, or Adam, created by God because God fathered Jesus’s mortal body and raised Him with a resurrected, immortal body.

Paul’s mission companion Luke also connects Adam and Jesus in his Gospel as the only two men called “son of God.” Luke announces Jesus as the Son of God at His birth and baptism. Following these announcements, Luke traces Jesus’s genealogy back to Adam, calling Adam a “son of God” (Lk 3:22, 38). Paul highlights that we like Adam have a natural or physical body and have the potential to receive an immortal body in the image of the “Man from heaven” (BSB).

**1 Cor 15:50. “neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”** Many philosophers denied the need for a body in the afterlife because of its corruptible properties, but Paul explains that resurrected bodies are changed to become incorruptible.

**1 Cor 15:51–52. “we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”** Paul expounds a mystery about the Resurrection. The resurrection of the body can occur instantly. Earlier, Paul taught the Saints in Thessalonica about the fate of those of their number who died before the Second Coming: they would suffer no disadvantage since at the Second Coming, the dead would rise with Christ (1 Ths 4:16). Now, Paul further teaches that the “dead in Christ” will rise with spiritual bodies and that those who are still alive at the Second Coming will not die but will receive their spiritual or resurrected bodies. The Prophet Joseph similarly taught that during the Millennium, those “that liveth in righteousness shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye.”<sup>19</sup>

**1 Cor 15:55. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”** This is another example of how well Paul knew the scriptures, as here he cites Hos 13:14 and references Isa 25:8. The sun and stars are not immortal, but humans are.

**1 Cor 15:57 (BSB). “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”** Paul summarizes our most beautiful Christian doctrine: Jesus Christ provides immortality and eternal life.

**1 Cor 15:58 (BSB). “Always excel in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”** Paul encourages disciples to work with God to accomplish His divine plan.

## **1 Corinthians 16**

### *Question about welfare contribution for Jerusalem—1 Cor 16:1–4*

The last question addressed in this epistle deals with a financial offering for the Jerusalem Saints. According to Acts, while Paul and Barnabas were in Syrian Antioch, they collected donations for the Jerusalem Saints who were experiencing a famine (Act 11:30). Now, at the end of Paul’s third mission, he asks the Corinthian Saints to gather tithes or a welfare collection for the poorer Jerusalem Saints. He only briefly mentions it in this letter but returns to the same plea in 2 Cor 8 and 9.

**1 Cor 16:1 (NIV). “Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.”** As an example, Paul tells of the Galatians’ financial collection (Gal 2:10). From the first chapters in Acts, we know that the Apostolic Church strove to have “no needy persons among them” (Act 4:34 NIV). Richard Draper and Michael Rhodes summarized, “The result likely strengthened the bond between those at the Church’s center and those of the surrounding areas. . . . [And] the Old Testament . . . nuanced the moral act at the center of being a covenant people.”<sup>20</sup> Paul refers to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem as Saints or “God’s dedicated people” (AB). The honor of becoming the Lord’s people through mutual service acknowledges the spiritual debt owed by the gentile churches to the founding Saints. It also unified the Christians as they helped one another across the empire.<sup>21</sup>

**1 Cor 16:2 (NIV).** “*each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up.*” Paul asked the Corinthians to donate or consecrate an offering every Sunday (the Christian Sabbath) that he would collect when he arrived. The amount donated was like a tithe, as it was “a proportion of his weekly income.”<sup>22</sup> Donations were a tangible demonstration of their faith, not wealth.

**1 Cor 16:3 (NIV).** “*when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.*” Paul promised that the delegates who collected the donations to take to Jerusalem would receive his introductory letters or that he would travel with them (Act 24:17).

#### *Paul’s travel plans—1 Cor 16:5–9*

**1 Cor 16:5–9 (BYU Rendition).** “*I will come to you. . . . I do not want to just see you in passing, but I hope to spend some time without, if the Lord should permit it . . . for a great and effective door has opened for me.*” The adversary worked against the kingdom of heaven, but Paul trusted the Lord to open other doors. Paul hoped to spend the next winter in Corinth, and Acts details how that happened.<sup>23</sup> It seems as if Paul began this letter from Ephesus and then left Ephesus after Pentecost (Act 16:8).

#### *Timothy’s and Apollos’s visits—1 Cor 16:10–12*

**1 Cor 16:10 (NIV).** “*When Timothy comes . . . he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am.*” Paul planned to send his beloved and adopted son, Timothy, to Corinth (as he had previously mentioned in 1 Ths 3:2 and again in Php 2:19). Paul tenderly asked them to warmly welcome him so that he will not fear them.<sup>24</sup> Was Paul describing Timothy’s youth (1 Tim 4:12) or the Corinthians’ need for kindness?

**1 Cor 16:12.** “*As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come.*” Paul’s tone sounds very friendly toward Apollos, assuring us that the divisions among the Corinthian Saints were not initiated by the missionaries. Paul had hoped that Apollos could also visit them, but at that time it was not feasible (or could Apollos’s visit encourage more factions within Corinth?).<sup>25</sup>

#### *Conclusion—1 Cor 16:13–20*

**1 Cor 16:13–14 (NIV).** “*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.*” Paul summarizes his epistle by exhorting the Saints to be firm in their faith and to apply charity to everything they do. The KJV “quit you like men” means “be courageous” (RSV) or “valiant” (NEB) or “brave” (JB).

**1 Cor 16:15–16 (NIV).** “*the household of Stephanas . . . have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord’s people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to submit to such people.*” Paul mentioned Stephanas and his household earlier as those whom he had baptized personally (1 Cor 1:16). Stephanas held church meetings in his house and may have been the first convert in southern Greece (Achaia). Paul asks the Corinthian Saints to follow the examples of those who “really worked hard” (JB) and were exemplary.



**1 Cor 16:18.** “For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.” Paul describes Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (three Corinthians) visiting him in Ephesus.

**1 Cor 16:19–20.** “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you.” Paul’s fellow Saints in and around Ephesus (modern Turkey) were referred to as “the churches in Asia” (for their seven names, see Rev 1–3). The “churches” referred to groups that gathered in homes. Aquila and Priscilla were two dynamic examples of early Jewish-Christian converts. They moved from Rome to Corinth, where Paul lived with them and worked as fellow tentmakers or leatherworkers.<sup>26</sup> They now lived in Ephesus, maybe on a mission, and joined Paul in sending greetings to their friends in Corinth.

**1 Cor 16:20 (JST).** “Greet ye one another with an holy **kiss salutation**.” Paul includes this admonition in the ending of four epistles, and it is similar to Peter’s ending in 1 Pe 5:14.<sup>27</sup> The JST changes it twice. The greeting was offered as a “concrete manifestation of the unity and fellowship of Christians, no matter what their social status might be . . . [and] in time it became known as ‘the kiss of peace.’”<sup>28</sup> It became a public sign of the Saints’ faith.

### *Postscript—1 Cor 16:21–24*

**1 Cor 16:21.** “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.” This is a routine practice that Paul used to authenticate at least four other epistles.<sup>29</sup>

**1 Cor 16:22.** “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.” The BSB renders this, “Be under a curse. Come, O Lord!” Paul’s ending with a curse is unique to this letter. The Cambridge commentary elaborates on these two words: *Anathema* signifies “to set apart, . . . which denotes something devoted to destruction for God’s honour’s sake.” *Maran-atha* is “two Syriac words *Maran*, *atha*, signifying either (1) our Lord is come, or (2) our Lord is coming.”<sup>30</sup> These are either a prayer for the resurrected Lord to make Himself known or felt among the Corinthian Saints or an expression of hope that the Second Coming will speedily come to cleanse the earth (see Rev 22:17).

## Notes

1 In the Book of Mormon, we find several more extensive discussions on Jesus’s Atonement by Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, Mosiah, Alma, and Mormon. See 2 Ne 2:3–10; 9:5–26; 11:4–5; Jac 4:11–13; Mosi 3:16–18; 4:2–8; Alm 7:11–15; 34:5, 8–16; 36:17–19; 42:11–29; Hel 5:9–12; 3 Ne 11:11–14; Moro 8:19–26. Comparing what modern revelation teaches on the Atonement with the biblical accounts provides a deeper appreciation for the Restoration and our Savior’s redemptive gift.

2 Richard D. Draper and Michael D. Rhodes, *Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2017), 682.

3 “Times and Seasons, 15 June 1842,” pp. 825–826, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/times-and-seasons-15-june-1842/11>.

4 For example, from December 26, 1841: “The public meeting of the saints was at President Joseph Smiths house, on Sunday evening Dec 26th, and after Patriarch Hyrum [Smith] and Elder Brigham [Young] had spoken on the principles of faith and the gifts of the Spirit. President Joseph read the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians and a part of the 14 chapter, and remarked that the gift of tongues was necessary in the Church; but that if Satan could not speak in tongues, he could not tempt a Dutchman, or any other nation.” “Journal, December 1841–December 1842,” p. 39, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1841-december-1842/7>. The Prophet gave another warning in a sermon to the women of Nauvoo on April 28, 1842: “If you have a matter to reveal, let it be in your own tongue. Do not indulge too much in the exercise of the gift of tongues, or the devil will take advantage of the innocent. You may speak in tongues for your comfort, but I lay this down for a rule that if anything is taught by the gift of tongues, it is not to be received for doctrine.” The summary notes recorded by Eliza R. Snow added, “The spirit of the Lord was pour’d out in a very powerful manner, never to be forgotten by those present on that interesting occasion.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” pp. 40–41, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/63>.

5 “Journal, December 1841–December 1842,” p. 39, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1841-december-1842/7>.

6 *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 225–226. In the early 1840s, Cartwright, a Methodist minister, reported meeting with Joseph Smith once in Springfield, Illinois. According to him, their conversation focused on the gifts of the Spirit: “On a certain occasion I fell in with Joe Smith . . . we soon fell into a free conversation on the subject of religion and Mormonism in particular. I found him to be a very illiterate and impudent desperado in morals, but, at the same time, he had a vast fund of low cunning. . . . He believed that among all the Churches in the world the Methodist was the nearest right, and that, as far as they went, they were right. But they had stopped short by not claiming the gift of tongues, of prophecy, and of miracles, and then quoted a batch of Scripture to prove his positions correct. Upon the whole, he did pretty well for clumsy Joe.” Their “high debate” ended when Joseph invited Cartwright to visit Nauvoo: “‘Now,’ said he, ‘if you will go with me to Nauvoo, I will show you many living witnesses that will testify that they were, by the saints, cured of blindness, lameness, deafness, dumbness, and all the diseases that human flesh is heir to; and I will show you,’ said he, ‘that we have the gift of tongues, and can speak in unknown languages, and that the saints can drink any deadly poison and it will not hurt them.’ He closed by saying, ‘the idle stories you hear about us are nothing but sheer persecution.’” Cartwright’s recollection of their conversation sounds exaggerated, but it unmistakably provides his impressions and perception.

7 Lynne Hilton Wilson, *Christ’s Emancipation of New Testament Women* (Palo Alto, CA: Good Sound Publishing, 2015), 199–122. Much of my explanation here is adapted and slightly changed from my book thanks to the recent feedback and edit from Michael D. Rhodes.

8 Rom 12:7; 16:1–2; Gal 3:28; 6:5–6; Eph 4:8, 11, 29; Php 4:2–3; 2 Tim 2:2; Titus 2:3–4; Act 18:26.

9 In addition to the dozen verses listed in the preceding paragraph, Paul explicitly supported female coworkers, including Chloe, Phebe, Lydia, Priscilla, the sisters in Philippi, and his yokefellow. If we add the positive examples in the book of Acts and the Gospels, the examples multiply. There are thirty named women, as well as several unnamed, who were positive disciples in the New Testament.

- 10 Draper and Rhodes, *Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 716.
- 11 John W. Welch and John F. Hall, *Charting the New Testament* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2002), 15-15.
- 12 For more information on the Joseph Smith Translation, see Robert J. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation: Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible—A History and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).
- 13 Draper and Rhodes, *Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 718.
- 14 Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 697–710.
- 15 Mishnah, *Ketuboth* 6:6; *Gittin* 9:10. Jewish women were not allowed to speak in their worship or synagogue nor in any public gathering. In fact, a husband could divorce his wife for speaking to another man. Dianne Bergant and Robert J. Karris, eds., *The Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989), 1129.
- 16 F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London, UK: Oliphants, 1971), 139.
- 17 “Thériomachéó,” *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, available online at <https://biblehub.com/greek/2341.htm>.
- 18 John Burslem Gregory, *The Oracles Ascribed to Matthew by Papias of Hierapolis* (London, UK: Longmans, Green, 1894), 117. Irenaeus was the Bishop in Lyon, France, in AD 170 and recorded statements by the apostolic father Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis. Also see Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2007), 127.
- 19 D&C 43:32; 63:51; 101:31.
- 20 Draper and Rhodes, *Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 829.
- 21 Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 158.
- 22 Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 158.
- 23 See Acts 20:2–4, 16, 22; see also 1 Cor 4:19.
- 24 Timothy's mother and grandmother, Unis and Lois, were Jewish, but his father was a Gentile. Paul figuratively adopted Timothy because he helped his conversion. For more on Timothy, see commentary on Act 16:1–6.
- 25 1 Cor 1:12; 2:4–6; 4:6.
- 26 Act 18:2, 18–19, 26; Rom 16:13; 2 Tim 4:19.
- 27 2 Cor 13:12; Rom 16:16; 1 Ths 5:26.
- 28 Joseph Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 629.
- 29 Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Th 3:17; Phm 1:19.
- 30 John Perowne, ed., *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1882), [https://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1\\_corinthians/16.htm](https://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1_corinthians/16.htm).