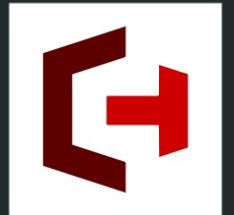


1 Corinthians

Verse by Verse



**Letter to a
Problematic
Church**



1 Corinthians 14

Letter to a Problematic Church



Introduction

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians 14



**Previously in
1 Corinthians**

**What's in
1 Cor. 14?**

Key Verses



Previously in 1 Corinthians

- We are in the midst of section in which Paul is dealing with elements of order in the church.
- One of the topics he needed to cover is the use of the various gifts.
- In the last chapter he reminded us that all of the gifts need to be exercised with love.
- New Testament **agape** love - the love of self-sacrifice - is more important than any gift.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians 14



**Previously in
1 Corinthians**

**What's in
1 Cor. 14?**

Key Verses



What's in 1 Corinthians 14?

- We are still dealing with church order and with spiritual gifts.
- There are two main gifts Paul will focus on here, those of **prophecy** and **tongues**.
- These two gifts, but especially the gift of tongues, seem to have been an important part of church life in Corinth.

Prophecy

Tongues

Prophecy

to prophesy, to speak an inspired message, sometimes encouraging obedience to God, sometimes proclaiming the future as a warning to preparedness and continued obedience

- from BillMounce.com



Bill Mounce,
Expert in
Biblical Greek,



What's in 1 Corinthians 14?

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Prophecy

Tongues

Tongues

[Literally] the tongue, [Also,] speech, talk, language, a language not proper to a speaker, a gift or faculty of such language

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Prophecy

Tongues

Introduction to 1 Corinthians 14



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Key Verses: **1 Corinthians 14:39-40**

39 So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But all things should be done decently and in order.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians 14



**Previously in
1 Corinthians**

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**Prophecy
and Tongues
14:1-25**

**Orderly
Worship
14:26-40**



Prophecy and Tongues 14:1-25

- **14:1-5** Contrasting tongues and prophecy
- **14:6-12** The potential problem with tongues
- **14:13-19** The need for understanding
- **14:20-25** The superiority of prophecy

14:1-5

14:6-12

14:13-19

14:20-25

14:1-5 Contrasting Tongues and Prophecy

- The gift of tongues is a God-given ability to pray in a language that the speaker does not understand.
- Prophecy is a God-given ability to communicate a God-given message to others for their benefit.
- The first gift benefits only the speaker, the second benefits the hearer of the words.

**Two Types
of Tongues**

**Two Types
of Prophecy**

Two Types of Tongues

- In Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost, the first Christians were all speaking in tongues, but these were languages that their audience could understand.
- Paul is here talking about a different type of gift.
- In this case the speaker speaks mainly to God, as in prayer, and no one present can be expected to understand this language.

From
Chuck Smith



Chuck Smith (1927-2013),
founding pastor of the
Calvary Chapel Movement

The gift of tongues is the gift whereby God enables us to communicate with Him in the Spirit, bypassing the narrow channel of our intellect. So often we find that words are inadequate to express our feelings of gratefulness to God for all His blessings. So the Spirit helps us by allowing us to commune with God in the Spirit, as we worship Him in Spirit and truth, with "groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

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Two Types of Prophecy

- There is a type of prophecy recorded in Scripture which is an inerrant, infallible message from God.
- The gift Paul speaks of here seems less dogmatic.
- It requires others to "weigh what is said" (v.29), but this does not seem to merely refer to whether it is a true or false prophecy.
- Consider the prophecy by Agabus in Acts 21, which predicted that Paul would be bound.
- Paul and his friends came to different conclusions about what Paul should do after the prophecy.

**From
Wayne Grudem**

**From
Leon Morris**

If someone really does think God is bringing something to mind which should be reported in the congregation, there is nothing wrong with saying, “I think the Lord is putting on my mind that . . .” or “It seems to me that the Lord is showing us . . .” or some similar expression. Of course that does not sound as “forceful” as “Thus says the Lord,” but if the message is really from God, the Holy Spirit will cause it to speak with great power to the hearts of those who need to hear.



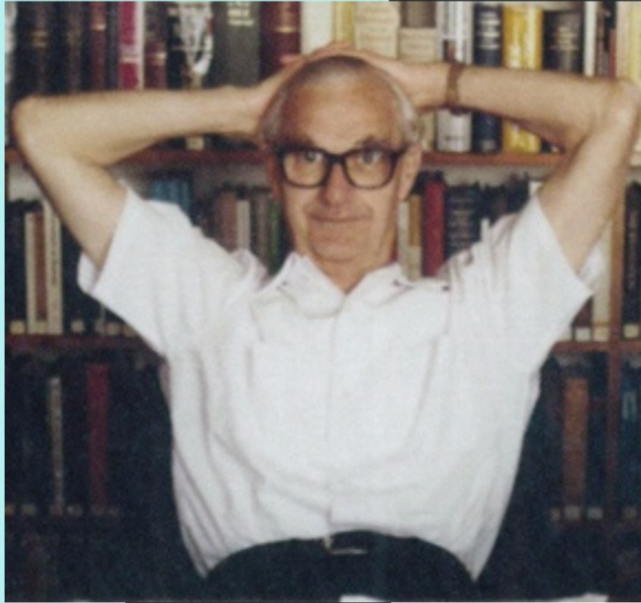
Wayne Grudem,
from his *Systematic
Theology*

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Leon Morris (1914 - 2006)
Australian New Testament
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Prophecy, then, is a means of building up Christian character, of encouraging and strengthening people, and of giving them comfort in their distress.

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Prophecy and Tongues 14:1-25

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14:1-5

14:6-12

14:13-19

14:20-25

14:6-12 The Potential Problem with Tongues

- The obvious problem with someone speaking in tongues is that people may not understand what is being said.
- We have probably all been in situations where someone was trying to communicate with us, but the lack of a common language made communication impossible.
- This is not to say the syllables are nonsense. They may be a valid language (v.10), but there seems to be no purpose in publicly exercising the gift if no one understands.



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14:13-19

14:20-25

14:13-19 The Need for Understanding

From
Wayne
Grudem

- Tongues may be exercised in a group setting if it is known that interpretation is available.
- Without interpretation, it is better not to exercise the gift, except in private.
- Paul seems to admit that this is what he does (v.18), by speaking in tongues even more than all of the Corinthians.

We may wonder why God would give the church a gift that operates in the unseen, spiritual realm and that is not understood by our minds. ... it is characteristic of much that God does in the new covenant age that it is done in the unseen, spiritual realm: regeneration, genuine prayer, worship “in spirit and in truth,” the spiritual blessings that come through the Lord’s Supper, spiritual warfare, laying up treasures in heaven, setting our minds on things above, where Christ is — all these and many more elements of the Christian life involve activities that occur in the unseen, spiritual realm, activities that we do not see or fully understand.



Wayne Grudem,
from his *Systematic
Theology*

14:13-19 The Need for Understanding

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Wayne
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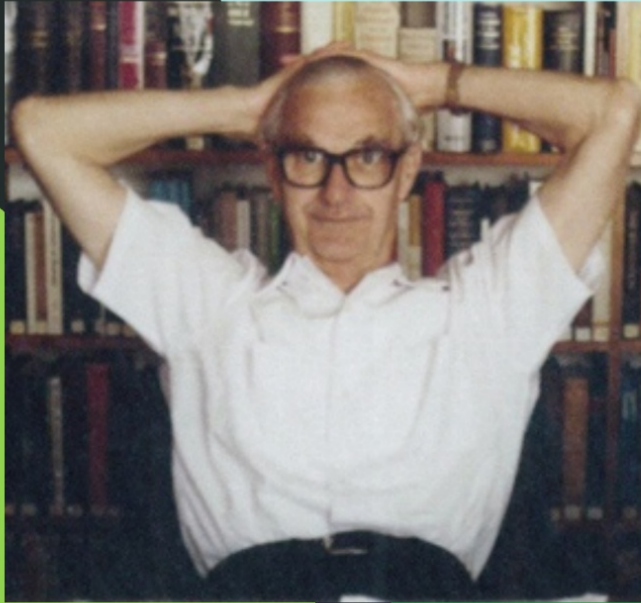
14:20-25

14:20-25 The Superiority of Prophecy

- The gist of this section is easy enough to grasp.
- A group of people speaking in tongues just seems a little crazy - and maybe not just a little.
- Prophecy, on the other hand, would happen whenever God uses us to speak something directly to the heart of another.
- What is harder to understand is the point of vv.21-22, and the business of signs.
- Leon Morris gives what may be the best of all solutions.

Leon Morris
on 14:22

The Prophecy
from Isaiah



Leon Morris (1914 - 2006)
Australian New Testament
scholar.

But perhaps the best suggestion is that ...
v. 22 should be seen as a rhetorical
question [a possible translation of the
Greek seen in Galatians 4:16] ...

The Corinthians may well have argued
that a man speaking in 'tongues' would
be a sign to outsiders that God was at
work, whereas prophecy did no more
than convey a message to the believer.
Paul asks, 'Are tongues, then, a sign, not
for believers but for unbelievers, and
prophecy for believers, not for
unbelievers?' He proceeds to refute this
view in the examples that follow.

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Leon Morris
on 14:22

The Prophecy
from Isaiah

The Prophecy from Isaiah

- The suggestion from Morris is helpful in that it makes sense of the prophecy from Isaiah 28:11-12.
- In context, hearing the foreign language was a prophecy of judgment upon Israel.
- The people were persistently disobedient.
- Hearing the voices of their foreign attackers only confirmed them in their sin.
- Paul says that an unbeliever hearing unintelligible tongues will not be converted, but only be confirmed in his unbelief.

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14:20-25

The Text of 1 Corinthians 14



**Prophecy
and Tongues
14:1-25**

**Orderly
Worship
14:26-40**

Orderly Worship 14:26-40

- **14:26-33a** A proper exercise of both tongues and prophecy in a group setting.
- **14:33b-35** Counsel about some troublesome women
- **14:36-40** Summary statement on the subject

14:26-33a

14:33b-35

14:36-40

14:26-33a A Proper Exercise of Both Tongues and Prophecy in a Group Setting.

- It is helpful to remember that most church gatherings at this time were not large and took place in homes.
- That is just one more good reason to have the church meet in home fellowships.
- Notice also that both tongues and prophecy are gifts that are very much under the control of the speaker.
- There is no reason for anyone to speak out of turn or for anyone to ever be disruptive.
- Overall church life can combine elements of both spontaneity and order.
- And again, some things seem most fitting in homes.

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14:26-33a

14:33b-35

14:36-40

14:33b-35 Counsel about Some Troublesome Women

From Craig
Blomberg

- First of all, this section cannot mean that Paul desires to silence all women in all church gatherings.
- He has already made clear in Chapter 11 that he expects women to pray and to prophesy.
- More likely, he is referring to any final word given about a prophecy.
- That is what he was discussing immediately above.
- It would also be consistent with his emphasis on male church leadership, chiefly in the role of elder.



Craig Blomberg,
Denver Seminary

Perhaps the best perspective, therefore, is to take Paul's commands as prohibiting women from participating in the final church decisions about the legitimacy of any given prophecy ... An authoritative evaluation of prophecy ... while requiring input from the whole congregation, would ultimately have been the responsibility of the church leadership (what Paul elsewhere calls elders or overseers), who ... seem to have been exclusively male.

14:33b-35 Counsel about Some Troublesome Women

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14:26-33a

14:33b-35

14:36-40

14:36-40 Summary Statement on the Subject

- The first two verses give us some idea of how unruly the Corinthian church must have been.
- Paul clearly expects some pushback, so he feels the need to assert his (rightful) apostolic authority.
- The last two verses - our key verses for today - sum up nicely what Paul teaches in this chapter.
 1. All the gifts are good, even tongues.
 2. Prophecy might be best.
 3. Yet everything must be done in an orderly way.

Orderly Worship 14:26-40

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14:26-33a

14:33b-35

14:36-40

The Text of 1 Corinthians 14



**Prophecy
and Tongues
14:1-25**

**Orderly
Worship
14:26-40**

1 Corinthians 14

Letter to a Problematic Church



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From
Chuck Smith

From Craig
Blomberg

Key Verses

A Final
Prayer



Chuck Smith (1927-2013),
founding pastor of the
Calvary Chapel
Movement

Apparently the church services in Corinth were out of control. People were speaking in tongues without any interpretation. Several people would be speaking at the same time. Women were yelling out questions in the middle of church. Visitors who came to the church didn't understand what was going on and thought the people were crazy. Church services should be orderly and they should make sense.

Conclusions



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Craig Blomberg,
Denver Seminary

As in chapter 12, Paul strongly encourages every member's participation or use of his or her gifts. Little wonder that the church historically has usually grown the fastest, and evangelism has proved the most effective, in small, informal fellowships. These may be fledgling "church plants," or small groups within larger, more established congregations.

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From
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Chuck Smith**

**From Craig
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A Final Prayer

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A Final Prayer

- Dear Father in heaven,
- We thank you for giving each one of us some meaningful contribution to the life of the church. We know that you have gifted each one of us, and you intend that our gifts be used for the benefit of all.
- We pray that you would speak through us into the lives of others - that is, please enable us to prophesy.
- Show us how to use all of our gifts for the building up of the church.
- In Christ, Amen

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