

1 Corinthians 14-16 Ep 218



In this outline are a few links to some of my favorite books that have really helped me understand the context and content of the scriptures. [Click here to see all of my favorite books on Amazon.](#) As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you).

Sent from: Paul, at Ephesus, joined by Sosthenes.

Sent to: Members at Corinth, provincial capital of southern Greece.

Date: Around 53-55 A.D.¹

Purpose: To correct dissension in that branch, to correct many wrong beliefs and actions, and to prepare them for Paul's future visit.

Main themes: Appeal for unity; revelation and man's wisdom; Paul's apostleship; sexual standards; marriage questions; true and false worship; Church organization and spiritual gifts; pure love; the Resurrection.

1 Corinthians 14: The proper use and order of spiritual gifts

The main message of 1 Corinthians 14 revolves around the proper use and order of spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues, within the context of congregational worship.² Paul emphasizes the importance of edifying and building up the church community rather than seeking personal recognition or self-gratification. He encourages the exercise of spiritual gifts in a way that promotes understanding and clarity, prioritizing prophecy over unintelligible tongues. Paul emphasizes the need for order, decency, and respect in the worship service, ensuring that everything is done for the edification of the church and in a manner that promotes peace and unity. The central message is the edification of the church through the appropriate and orderly exercise of spiritual gifts in a way that promotes understanding and builds up the community of believers.

I. Pursue Love and Desire Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 14.1-5)

¹ This date is up to debate. I have read students of Paul's writings citing this text as early as 51 A.D., as well as others dating 1 Corinthians to a later time, even as late as 57 A.D. Since I was not there, I do not know. Richard Lloyd Anderson states that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians "about 57 A.D." (see: [New Testament: Sperry Symposium Classics](#), "Paul's Witness to the Historical Integrity of the Gospels," Deseret Book, 2006. Chuck Swindoll states that 1 Corinthians was penned in 55 A.D. See: [Swindoll, "First Corinthians"](#). Accessed 6.1.23. Douglas Campbell dates the text to the Spring of 51 A.D. See: Campbell, "[Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to a community in the middle of a culture war.](#)" Accessed 6.1.23. Randall Niles cites 53 as the date of this letter. Niles, "[Paul's letter to the Corinthians.](#)" Accessed 6.1.23.

² Congregational worship, or corporate worship - this term highlights the collective gathering of members in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to worship together as a community. It acknowledges the shared experience, unity, and sense of belonging that comes from worshipping alongside fellow believers.

But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to **edification**, and exhortation, and comfort. (1 Cor. 14.3).

Greek: ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ **οἰκοδομῆν** καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν.

The word οἰκοδομή oikodomē denotes the idea of building someone up. The things of God edify: they spiritually support and lift us toward a better life. They bring us closer to our Father in Heaven. The things of Satan do the opposite. No spiritual growth occurs, no intelligence is communicated, we are not edified. The Prophet Joseph Smith observed:

“Others frequently possess a spirit that will cause them to lie down, and during its operation, animation is frequently entirely suspended; they consider it to be the power of God, and a glorious manifestation from God—a manifestation of what? Is there any intelligence communicated? Are the curtains of heaven withdrawn, or the purposes of God developed? Have they seen and conversed with an angel—or have the glories of futurity burst upon their view? No! but their body has been inanimate, the operation of their spirit suspended, and all the intelligence that can be obtained from them when they arise, is a shout of ‘glory,’ or ‘hallelujah,’ or some incoherent expression; but they have had ‘the power.’

“The Shaker will whirl around on his heel, impelled by a supernatural agency or spirit, and think that he is governed by the Spirit of God; and the Jumper will jump and enter into all kinds of extravagances. A Primitive Methodist will shout under the influence of that spirit, until he will rend the heavens with his cries; while the Quakers (or Friends) moved as they think, by the Spirit of God, will sit still and say nothing. Is God the author of all this? If not of all of it, which does He recognize? Surely, such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the kingdom of heaven.”³

We read in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 50:

Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.²³ And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.²⁴ That which is of God is alight; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.²⁵ And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you; ²⁶ He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all.

A. Exhortation to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially prophecy (14:1)

B. Prophecy as a gift that builds up the church (14:3-4)

C. Comparison of prophecy and speaking in tongues (14:2, 5)

II. Orderly Use of Spiritual Gifts in Worship (1 Corinthians 14:6-25)

One of the keys in these verses seems to be that the edification or building up of the church is paramount.

A. Emphasis on intelligibility and edification in communication (14:6-12)

³ [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p. 203–4.

Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. (1 Cor. 14.11)

Greeks traditionally looked down on non-Greeks as “barbarians” or “foreigners,” calling them “barbarians” because they spoke “strange” (i.e., non-Greek) languages, but even those who did not believe in the superiority of Greeks divided the world into “Greeks and barbarians” (e.g., Rom 1:14), often on the basis of ethnicity but sometimes on the basis of language. (Sometimes even slips in speaking Greek or different accents were called “barbaric.”) Paul simply observes that those who cannot communicate intelligibly may each view the other as an alien (14:11).⁴

B. Importance of clear teaching and understanding (14:13-19)

Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. (1 Cor. 14.13-14)

"There are only two gifts that could be made visible—the gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy. These are things that are the most talked about, and yet if a person spoke in an unknown tongue, according to Paul's testimony, he would be a 'barbarian' to those present. They would say that it was gibberish. And if he prophesied, they would call it nonsense. 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."⁵

Keener relates, “The Jewish philosopher Philo described divine inspiration as God possessing his prophets and completely overwhelming their rational faculties during the period of inspiration (e.g., *Who Is the Heir?* 264-65), a view often held by Gentiles (e.g., Euripides, *Bacchae* 298-99; Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.77-102). By contrast, Paul believes that prophetic inspiration relates to the rational faculties (as does interpretation); even with regard to glossolalia or inspired tongues, which are the prayers of a different, nonrational component of human nature, Paul does not indicate that the mind is forced to be inactive. Paul values both kinds of worship and both components of human nature. (In modern terms, these components of human nature are perhaps similar to the affective and cognitive components.)”⁶

The prophet Joseph Smith taught:

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 [that is, in the tongues of the foreigners].⁷

"Caution should always attend the use of the gift of tongues. 'It is not necessary,' for instance, 'for tongues to be taught to the Church particularly, for any man that has the Holy Ghost, can speak of the things of God in his own tongue as well as to speak in another; for faith comes not by signs, but by hearing the word of God.' (*Teachings*, p. 148-149.) 'If anything is taught by the gifts of tongues, it is not

⁴ Keener, p. 488.

⁵ Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., [Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible](#), Deseret Book, 1994, p. 167.

⁶ Keener, p. 488.

⁷ [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p. 247-248.

to be received for doctrine.' (*Teachings*, p. 229.) 'Speak not in the gift of tongues without understanding it, or without interpretation. The devil can speak in tongues; the adversary will come with his work; he can tempt all classes; can speak in English or Dutch. Let no one speak in tongues unless he interpret, except by the consent of the one who is placed to preside; then he may discern or interpret, or another may.' (*Teachings*, p. 162, 212.)

Joseph F. Smith relates his thoughts on the gift of tongues:

"I believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit unto men, but I do not want the gift of tongues, except when I need it. I needed the gift of tongues once, and the Lord gave it to me. I was in a foreign land, sent to preach the gospel to a people whose language I could not understand. Then I sought earnestly for the gift of tongues, and by this gift and by study, in a hundred days after landing upon those islands I could talk to the people in their language as I now talk to you in my native tongue. This was a gift that was worthy of the gospel. There was a purpose in it. There was something in it to strengthen my faith, to encourage me and to help me in my ministry. . . . Paul did not seem to care much about the gift of tongues either. He said to the Corinthians: 'I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.' (1 Cor. 14:19)"⁸

C. Instruction on the appropriate use of tongues in the worship setting (14:20-25)

On one view, Paul here refers to tongues as a sign of judgment that causes nonbelievers to stumble (cf. 14:21); on another, Paul quotes the Corinthians in 14:22 and refutes them in 14:23-25 (cf. 6:12-14). Prophecy was a known phenomenon in the ancient world, whereas the gift of tongues was not (or at least, any parallels to it were extremely rare); ancients respected prophecy, but if they did not know beforehand to expect speaking in tongues, they would not know what was happening (cf. Acts 2:13). Perhaps Paul would not object to a whole group simultaneously worshiping charismatically under other circumstances (e.g., Acts 2:4-21; cf. 1 Sam 10:5; 19:20); but not in the Corinthian house churches where unbelievers could be alienated. Outsiders bowing and acknowledging God probably recalls Isaiah 45:14.⁹

"Will they not say that you are mad?" (1 Cor. 14.23)

Given its associations with ecstatic frenzy in some (esp. pagan) circles, prophetic speech was often connected with madness (cf. 2 Kgs 9:11; Acts 26:24).¹⁰

III. Guidelines for Conduct in the Assembly (1 Corinthians 14:26-40)

How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. (1 Cor. 14.26-27)

⁸ Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 201. His son, Joseph Fielding Smith, related a similar thought when he taught, "The true gift of tongues is made manifest in the Church more abundantly, perhaps, than any other spiritual gift. Every missionary who goes forth to teach the gospel in a foreign language, if he is prayerful and faithful, receives this gift." See: *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. Deseret Book, 1957-1966, 2: 29.

⁹ Keener, p. 489.

¹⁰ E.g., Ovid *Metam.* 2.640; see C. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 23–26. Hellenistic thought, however, follows Plato in distinguishing "divine madness" from lower forms ("Ecstasy," 505 in *OCD*).

Brother Richard Anderson explains, "Early Christian worship involved organization and participation. Standardized ceremonies today tend to create a passive Christian audience, but attending the Early Church was anything but a 'spectator sport.' Paul insisted that there be worship, not chaos."¹¹

Keener elaborates:

That Paul had spent over a year and a half with them (Acts 18:11, 18) and had apparently not told them these rules before suggests that these rules are directed toward the specific situation in Corinth. The rules necessary to keep worship edifying to everyone might vary from one culture and setting to another, but the principle of keeping it edifying to everyone is much more universal. Some ancients acted in ecstatic frenzy when they claimed to be inspired; Paul believes that inspiration can be channeled in disciplined ways.

Although prayer in the synagogues may have been more spontaneous in Paul's day than later, he advocates more individual participation here than would have been natural in other worship settings of his day. We should keep in mind, however, that the house churches in Corinth probably each comprised at the most only fifty members. Psalms were used regularly in Jewish worship (here Paul may mean either biblical psalms or newly composed ones; some postbiblical ones appear at *Qumran), as was teaching; but the revelations, tongues and interpretations are distinctly Christian features of worship.

Order was very important in lecture settings and public assemblies in antiquity, as is clear from the frequent practice of seating according to rank. In Essene assemblies, one had to have permission to speak, and one spoke in order according to rank (Dead Sea Scrolls 1QS 6.10-13; Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.132). Paul is not so strict here, but he wishes to balance spontaneity with order; not everything that was inherently good was necessarily good for the gathered assembly. In the Old Testament, charismatic worship was not incompatible with order (1 Chron 25:1-5; cf. also Philo's description of an Egyptian Jewish sect of worshipers called the Therapeutae).¹²

"The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Cor. 14.32)

President Kimball taught, "Whenever an individual gets out of his area and begins to tell the bishop of revelations he's received for the conduct of the ward, then he's wrong. His revelations are coming from the wrong source because God is not the author of confusion."¹³

A. Instruction for the orderly conduct of various spiritual activities in the church gathering (14:26-33)

B. Limitations on women's participation and the need for submission (14:34-35)

As in all the churches of the saints, 34 the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Cor. 14.33b-35 RSV).

¹¹ Anderson, [Understanding Paul](#), p. 109-110.

¹² Keener, p. 489.

¹³ [The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#), edited by Edward L. Kimball, Bookcraft, 1982, 453. In this vein, it has been taught that the whole church should be made up of prophets that are subject to the prophet. By this we mean that all should have the spirit of prophecy, thus being prophets filled with the Holy Ghost, while at the same time being subject to the one whole holds all the keys. See McConkie, [Millennial Messiah](#), p. 3265.

How does the statement about women in these verses apply today?

In Paul's day, there were different expectations about how women participated in society, including in church meetings. Whatever the teachings in 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 meant in Paul's day, they shouldn't be understood to mean that women cannot speak and lead in the Church today.

President Russell M. Nelson said to the women of the Church today: "We ... need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices. The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God!"¹⁴

Brother Richard Anderson's commentary here is useful:

"In [chapter 11], Paul insists that a woman ought not to 'pray and prophesy' without being veiled (1 Cor. 11:5). This proves that women did participate in Christian meetings, which is also known through the names of several faithful, participating sisters mentioned in Acts and the letters. This suggests that Paul had a particular kind of speaking in mind in the later chapter (chapter 14). Some ask whether Corinthian women were interrupting meetings with questions. Or were they 'speaking out' in the sense of 'leading out,' loudly correcting the presiding elder? The Joseph Smith Translation interprets 'speak' in that official sense, saying that women were not permitted to 'lead.' That is certainly one thrust of the chapter, since men and women are both told to be silent whenever someone else is speaking (1 Cor. 14:28, 30)."¹⁵

Richard Draper shared this insight:

"The JST also clarifies this statement: 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak' (KJV, 1 Cor. 14:34). This statement seems odd since the Apostle Paul had already acknowledged the right of women to pray and prophesy, the latter meaning to teach under the power of the Holy Ghost (see 1 Cor. 11:5). The JST changes one word and in so doing clarifies the whole issue: 'It is not permitted unto them to *rule*'; rather, they are 'to be under obedience, as also saith the law [of Moses]' (JST, 1 Cor. 14:34, footnote b). From this simple change, we see that the Apostle Paul was not forbidding sisters to teach or pray, but rather correcting those who attempted to usurp priesthood authority."¹⁶

From Craig Keener, we have the following commentary:

Because the topic changes so abruptly and some manuscripts relocate 14:34-35, many scholars see these verses as an interpolation by a later scribe.¹⁷ They can also be read, however (with many other

¹⁴ President Russell M. Nelson, "[A Plea to My Sisters](#)," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96.

¹⁵ Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, Deseret Book, 1983, p. 111-112.

¹⁶ Richard D. Draper, "[New Light on Paul's Teachings](#)," *Ensign*, Sept. 1999.

¹⁷For example, Philip Payne argues that 1 Cor. 14.34-35 was a later interpolation by a scribe. His working through the sources may be a bit complicated for the average student of the New Testament, however, his paper highlights this complexity and helps us understand that there are quite a few moving pieces when analyzing texts and trying to figure out what is Paul's work and what was added later. In his article [Fuldensis, Sigla for Variants in Vaticanus and 1 Cor 14.34-35](#), Philip B. Payne writes, "scribes in that period simply did not take the liberty to rearrange the argument of scripture in this manner. We do not have a single parallel example of a scribe rearranging the sequence of an original text of any of the NT letters to make it more logical." (*New Testament Studies*, Vol. 41, 1995, p. 244-245.

scholars), as a digression; these were common in ancient literature. While addressing the topic of church order, Paul briefly digresses from his contrast of prophecy and tongues and regulations concerning them to address the interruptions of some women occurring during the teaching period of the church service. Unless Paul changes the subject from women's universal silence (v. 34) to asking questions (v. 35a) and back to universal silence again (v. 35b), his general statement about women's silence in church addresses only the specific issue of their challenges in verse 34a. Paul has already noted that, under normal conditions, women may pray and prophesy in church (11:5). The issue here could be their inadequate acquaintance with Scripture rather than a transcultural statement about gender.

Although more progressive views existed, many traditionally held that women should not speak in public in mixed-gender company (Plutarch, *Advice to the Bride* 32; *Morals* 142D; Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 1.21; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 3.8.6); some would have deemed even the house-churches such a setting. (Even very traditional Greek men sometimes made exceptions for specifically inspired speech; cf. 11:5.) Biblical law includes no specific text that enjoins silence or submission on women, although Paul could refer back to his creation argument in 11:8-9, to the effects of the curse in Genesis 3:16, or to the example of the matriarchs (1 Pet 3:5). But he can also use "law" generally (1 Cor 14:21), so he could refer to the generally subordinate position of women in Old Testament times to show that it is not wrong for them to be submissive in some cultural settings. (Josephus also claims that the "law" supports wives' submission, without citing a specific passage; *Against Apion* 2.200- 201.) Some also suggest that Paul cites the Corinthians' view in 14:34-35 and refutes it in 14:36.¹⁸

C. Encouragement to pursue peace and edification in all things (14:36-40)

IV. Conclusion: Summary and Final Instructions (1 Corinthians 14:39-40)

A. Emphasis on the importance of prophesying and not hindering tongues (14:39-40)

B. Final call for all things to be done decently and in order

1 Corinthians 15: Paul's testimony of the resurrection

The main message of 1 Corinthians 15 revolves around the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its significance for believers. The chapter addresses the essential nature of Christ's resurrection and its implications for the hope of eternal life for all believers. This chapter underscores the essentiality of

In his book [Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters](#) published by Zondervan in 2009, Philip Payne presents his latest thoughts and compelling arguments regarding 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as a potential interpolation, along with his views on other passages related to gender roles in Paul's letters. His close examination of this issue carefully examines multiple perspectives, employing historical-grammatical interpretation and textual criticism to support his points. There are other scholars, despite considering the [distigmai](#) in the text, maintain that this evidence is not sufficient to conclude that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is an interpolation. [In 1995, the existence of "umlauts" (the symbol ") in the margin of Codex Vaticanus was discovered by Philip Payne. In 2009 the "" symbol was renamed "distigme" (so, one distigme, two distigmai). Payne's initial analysis of the distigmai and their locations showed that whoever put these previously unnoticed symbols into Vaticanus' margin had done so with the intention of denoting textual variants in the lines of text that they saw in the manuscript.] In an article titled "[The Textual Problem of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35](#)," Daniel B. Wallace summarizes this perspective. He argues that, despite the variance in the placement of verses 34-35 within the text, they must have been part of the original text since they exist in all early manuscripts. Wallace suggests that the Apostle Paul himself added the [paragraphe](#), supporting their authenticity.

¹⁸ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, IVP Academic, p. 490.

Christ's resurrection, the certainty of believers' future resurrection, and the victory over death and sin that believers have through Christ. It emphasizes the hope of eternal life and encourages believers to remain steadfast in their faith and service to the Lord.

What did the people of Paul's day think about life after death and the possibility of resurrection?

Educated, elite Corinthians probably followed views held by many philosophers, such as immortality of the soul after the body's death.¹⁹ Many viewed the body as earthly, the soul as heavenly (Heraclitus *Ep.* 9; Seneca *Dial.* 12.11.6), including some Jews (Wis 9:15–16; *Sipre Deut.* 306.28.2). Many philosophers viewed the immortal soul as the divine part of a person;²⁰ some Hellenistic Jewish thinkers concurred (Philo *Creation* 135). Contrary to the erroneous guesses of many NT scholars, most Jews in this period accepted this distinction between soul and body, and that the soul remained immortal after death.²¹ But most Judeans, and at least some Diaspora Jews, also accepted the doctrine of a future bodily resurrection alongside the soul's immortality after death.

Some Greeks (like Epicureans and popular doubts on tombstones) denied even an afterlife. Yet even Greeks who expected an afterlife for the soul could not conceive of bodily resurrection (which they would view as the reanimation of corpses) or glorified bodies. The closest analogies were old myths about deceased souls brought back from Hades; annually returning underworld deities connected with spring vegetation;²² witches magically resuscitating corpses; and (most common in novels) recovery from merely apparent death.

Most of Palestinian Judaism, however, emphasized bodily resurrection, as the canonical status of Dan 12:2 almost required.²³ Later rabbis felt that the Sadducees' denial of the resurrection deprived them of sharing the afterlife (*m. Sanh.* 10:1; *'Abot R. Nat.* 5A; 10, §26b). Some Diaspora Jews in this period also embraced the concept (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 4.179–82), although often accommodating it to Hellenistic understanding of immortality (Ps.-Phoc. 102–05), as Josephus does.²⁴ It is thus possible that Paul's Judean conceptions created friction not only with Gentile but even with Jewish elements in the congregation. Paul seems to move as far in their direction as possible here ("spiritual," heavenly bodies of glory; even further in 2 Cor 4:16–5:10) without compromising his insistence on the bodily character of future hope, rooted in the goodness of God's physical creation.²⁵

I. The Importance and Certainty of Christ's Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-11)

A. Introduction and reminder of the gospel preached (15:1-2)

Good rhetoric usually strove to appeal to common ground; Paul begins by appealing to the message by which they were converted, hence to which they gave assent (15:1–2; also 2:1–5; Gal 3:2–5; 1 Thess 2:1;

¹⁹ E.g., Plato *Phaed.* 64CE, 67C; Cicero *De Re Publica* 6.24.26; Seneca *Dial.* 11.9.3; 12.11.7.

²⁰ Seneca *Nat.Q.* 1.pref. 14; *Lucil.* 78.10; Epictetus *Diatr.* 1.3.3.

²¹ For summary see R. H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology: with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1976); C. Keener, *John* (2003), 538, 553–54.

²² In Corinth, cf. the cult of Persephone (R. S. Stroud, *Demeter and Persephone in Ancient Corinth* [Princeton, NJ: ASCSA, 1987]).

²³ E.g., 2 Macc 7:9, 14, 23, 29; 14:46; *Pss. Sol.* 3:12; 1 *En.* 22:13.

²⁴ *Ant.* 18.14; *War* 2.163; 3.374; *Ag. Ap.* 2.218. He accommodates Palestinian resurrection ideas to Neo-Pythagorean reincarnation language more acceptable to his Hellenistic audience

²⁵ Craig Keener, [1-2 Corinthians: New Cambridge Bible Commentary](#), Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 122-123.

3:4). Paul warns them that if Christ was not raised, their faith is in vain (15:2, 14, 17; cf. 2 Cor 6:1; Gal 2:2; 3:4; 4:11; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 2:1; 3:5), but assures them that this is not the case (15:10, 58). Their salvation depended on it (15:2). Early Christians saw the gospel events predicted or foreshadowed in Scripture (15:4), and Paul may think of texts like Psalm 16:10–11 and Isaiah 53:4–12, used by other Christians.²⁶

B. The crucial role of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (15:3-4)

C. Eyewitness testimonies of Christ's resurrection (15:5-11)

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. (1 Cor. 15.5-8)

President Russell M. Nelson said:

I declare my devotion to God our Eternal Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ. I know Them, love Them, and pledge to serve Them—and you—with every remaining breath of my life.²⁷

President Hinckley taught:

"Can anyone doubt the veracity of that account? No event of history has been more certainly confirmed. There is the testimony of all who saw and felt and spoke with the risen Lord. He appeared on two continents in two hemispheres and taught the people before His final ascension. Two sacred volumes, two testaments speak of this most glorious of all events in all of human history. But these are only accounts, the faithless critic says. To which we reply that beyond these is the witness and the testimony, borne by the power of the Holy Ghost, of the truth and validity of this most remarkable event. Through the centuries untold numbers have paid with the sacrifice of their comforts, their fortunes, their very lives for the convictions they carried in their hearts of the reality of the risen, living Lord."²⁸

1 Cor. 15.9 Greek: Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ·

For I am the **least** of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because **I persecuted** the church of God. (1 Cor. 15.9, my translation).

Robert J. Matthews taught, "Paul referred to himself as the 'chief of sinners' (1 Tim. 1:15), and as 'the least of the apostles' (1 Cor. 15:9)... He professed his own nothingness (1 Cor. 3:5-7), but explained also that he could 'do all things through Christ which strengtheneth' him (Philip. 4:13). Paul felt that of his own self he was weak, but that with the assistance of Jesus he could accomplish whatever was necessary."²⁹

²⁶ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 123.

²⁷ Russell M. Nelson, "[As We Go Forward Together](#)," *Ensign*, Apr. 2018.

²⁸ Gordon B. Hinckley, "[This Glorious Easter Morn](#)," *Ensign*, May 1996.

²⁹ Robert J. Matthews, [Behold the Messiah](#), Bookcraft, 1994, p. 334.

II. Addressing Doubts about the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-34)

Paul's logic: Our whole faith hinges on the resurrection. How can you be part of our community of believers and deny the basic tenet of everything we stand for?

Elder Maxwell taught, "Surely Paul anticipated a sad trend regarding people's acceptance of Jesus, which accounts for so many moderns who are stranded in the maze. The trend is one in which Christ is credited with a significant ministry in this life but in which his literal resurrection is denied. Paul spoke boldly, declaring, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' (1 Corinthians 15:19.) A Christianity that focuses on an *unrisen* Christ is a callow contradiction and it produces a special misery among its adherents, for such faith, Paul said, is 'vain; ye are yet in your sins.'

"Is this dilution of doctrine not what has happened to so much of so-called Christianity with its existential emphasis? An unrisen Christ could never lift all men up! To take the name of Christ to preach against His (and the universal) resurrection is treason of the highest order. Sadly, the name of Christ is often appropriated to fight the work of Christ. Yet possessed of an abiding testimony of the resurrection, modern disciples, like those of old, too can say: 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' (2 Corinthians 4:8-9.)

"Those who 'in this life only have hope in Christ' will be miserable. Without the resurrection there is no ultimate hope, which brings proximate despair. If death is still victorious, how meaningful is life, after all? If Christ cannot help me, then why follow Him? Hence, in torturing the truth about Christ, mortals only torture themselves. A denial of the divinity of Jesus and His literal resurrection leads many to an existential philosophy that appropriates the name of Christ for a religion that finally slumps into a Sadducean stance. How ironic, how cruel! Thus another compelling reason to reject the world is its telestial theology about Christ."³⁰

A. Consequences of denying the resurrection (15:12-19)

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (1 Cor. 15.19)

"If our view is limited to mortal life, some things become unbearable because they seem so unfair and so permanent. There are doctrines which, if understood, will bring a perspective toward and a composure regarding problems which otherwise have no satisfactory explanation."³¹

1 Cor. 15.18-19: These verses suggest that Paul rejects the Greek idea of an immortality of the soul without a bodily resurrection; if there is no resurrection, the Epicurean denial of an afterlife also follows (1 Cor. 15.32). (Despite a view of judgment, the common Greek view of most people's afterlife as shades below the earth was dreary and unhappy to begin with, providing little of the incentive Paul found in the resurrection. Some other Greeks in this period believed in a heavenly destiny for the soul, and yet others would have agreed with the Epicureans that there was no afterlife.) Paul could believe in the resurrection and in an intermediate existence for the soul, as many Pharisees did. But if God had not

³⁰ Neal A. Maxwell, [Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward](#), Deseret Book, 1977, p. 16.

³¹ Boyd K. Packer, ["The Moving of the Water,"](#) *Ensign*, May 1991.

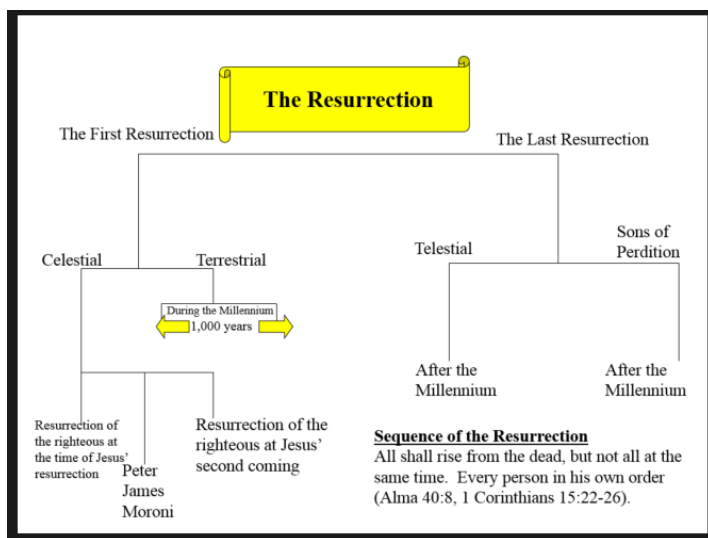
provided future hope for the whole person, Jewish people like Paul, who acknowledged the bodily nature of human existence, would have doubted that he had provided any future hope at all.³²

B. Christ's resurrection as the firstfruits and its implications for believers (15:20-23)

Mosiah 15.20-24 reads:

20 But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead. 21 And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ—for so shall he be called. 22 And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection. 23 They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death. 24 And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord.

C. The order of resurrection and the defeat of death (15:24-28)



The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15.26)

Elder James E. Talmage taught:

"The vanquishment of Satan and his hosts shall be complete. The dead, small and great, all who have breathed the breath of life on earth, shall be resurrected—every soul that has tabernacled in flesh, whether good or evil—and shall stand before God, to be judged according to the record as written in the books. So shall be brought to glorious consummation the mission of the Christ. 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all

³² Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 492.

rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet.' Then shall the Lord Jesus 'deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father spotless, saying-I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign for ever and ever.' The earth shall pass to its glorified and celestialized condition, an eternal abode for the exalted sons and daughters of God. Forever shall they reign, kings and priests to the Most High, redeemed, sanctified, and exalted through their Lord and God JESUS THE CHRIST."³³

D. The urgency of righteous living in light of the resurrection hope (15:29-34)

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? (1 Cor. 15.29)

In I Corinthians, Paul also refers to an early Christian practice of vicarious baptism for the dead, which is one of the rites of the LDS temples. While arguing that without the resurrection of Christ and of all mankind, faith and repentance and even his own preaching are all in vain, he asks: "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?" (1 Cor. 15.29.) Scholars and theologians have proposed many different theories to try and explain this verse. Yet honest scholars, both Catholic and Protestant (even those hostile to the LDS doctrine), are forced to admit that the passage describes vicarious baptism for the dead, and that proposed alternatives are really just attempts to avoid the clear meaning of the text because of its theological implications.

Regarding 1 Cor. 15.29, a conservative Protestant work explains: "The normal reading of the text is that some Corinthians are being baptized, apparently vicariously, in behalf of some people who have already died. It would be fair to add that this reading is such a plain understanding of the Greek text that no one would ever have imagined the various alternatives were it not for the difficulties involved." The finest Roman Catholic biblical commentary is of the same opinion: "Again, the Apostle alludes to a practice of the Corinthian community as evidence for a Christian faith in the resurrection of the dead. It seems that in Corinth some Christians would undergo baptism in the name of their deceased non-Christian relatives and friends, hoping that this vicarious baptism might assure them a share in the redemption of Christ."

Both Catholic and Protestant scholars agree that the Corinthian Saints practiced baptism for the dead. Now, the argument is sometimes made that Paul must have merely tolerated an aberrant practice at Corinth, that he looked the other way because these vicarious baptisms reflected a kind of faith in Christ. There are serious problems with this view, even from a non-LDS perspective. But even if the argument were valid, Latter-day Saints would be entitled to ask their critics, If the Apostle Paul found vicarious rites for the dead tolerable among the Corinthian Saints, why must the same practice be judged intolerable among the Latter-day Saints? If the Bible shows that the Apostle Paul was in fellowship with those who, rightly or wrongly, practiced baptism for the dead, how can modern Christians reject the precedent?³⁴

Elder Gerrit W. Gong taught:

³³ James E. Talmage, [Jesus the Christ](#), p. 381-382

³⁴ Stephen E. Robinson, [Are Mormons Christian?](#), Deseret Book, 1991, chapter 8 The Doctrinal Exclusion: Lesser Arguments.

Some years ago, a priest in Central America told me he was studying Latter-day Saint “baptism for deceased persons.” “It does seem just,” the priest said, “that God would offer every person opportunity to receive baptism, no matter when or where they lived, except little children, who ‘are alive in Christ.’ The Apostle Paul,” the priest noted, “speaks of the dead awaiting baptism and resurrection.” Vicarious temple ordinances promise all nations, kindreds, and tongues that no one need “remain a slave of death, of hell, or of the grave.”³⁵

Elder Holland said, “I know that “in [our] Father’s house are many mansions,” but, speaking personally, if I were to be so fortunate as to inherit one of them, it could be no more to me than a decaying shack if Pat and our children were not with me to share that inheritance. And for our ancestors, some of whom lived and died anciently without even hearing the name of Jesus Christ, we would have hoped for that most just and merciful of biblical concepts to be restored—the practice of the living offering up saving ordinances on behalf of their kindred dead (See: 1 Cor. 15.29; D&C 128.15-17). No practice I can imagine would demonstrate with more splendor a loving God’s concern for every one of His earthly children no matter when they lived nor where they died.”³⁶

And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? (1 Cor. 15.30)³⁷

For the language of continual opposition, see: Alma 46.7; Psalm 44:22 and 119:109. In Alma, Mormon relates that the people of Nephi were in “exceedingly precarious and dangerous” circumstances, “notwithstanding their great victory” they had experienced and their causes for rejoicing. I would relate that all of us, regardless of our wealth, power or position, are in precarious circumstances while we are in the flesh. The only true security is in Jesus. We may get a cancer diagnosis tomorrow. Our country may become engulfed in war. Storms may tear apart our communities or mobs may burn our cities. But Christ and the peace he can bring us can withstand all of these, even in the midst of the greatest storms this world has to offer.

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.³⁸ 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. (1 Cor. 15.31-32)

“Die daily” (1 Cor. 15.31) - In this context, “die daily” is hyperbole for Paul’s proleptic experience of martyrdom in his repeated sufferings for the gospel.³⁹

"I can recall thinking, at the student stage of life, of consecrating my life in one grand, heroic gesture. But as life progresses, our moments for consecration are specific, finite, and simple...We should be ready to consecrate our talents to the task at hand, whether or not it is a task we have envisioned for ourselves. Consecration is not a once-in-a-lifetime event; it is a daily devotion. As Paul says, we 'die daily' in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:31)."⁴⁰

³⁵ Elder Gerrit W. Gong, [“All Nations, Kindreds, and Tongues,”](#) Oct. 2020 Conference.

³⁶ Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, [“A Perfect Brightness of Hope,”](#) April 2020 Conference.

³⁷ τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν (1 Cor. 15.30). κινδυνεύω denotes the idea of being in danger or peril.

³⁸ καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω νῆ τὴν ἡμετέραν **καύχησιν** ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν “Every day I die, by the **glorying** of you which I have in Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 15.31, my translation).

³⁹ Keener, p. 493.

⁴⁰ Henry B. Eyring, [On Becoming a Disciple Scholar](#), Bookcraft, 1995, p. 78.

“I have fought with beasts at Ephesus... let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32)

Romans were often entertained by watching criminals, prisoners of war or slaves mauled by wild beasts in the arena (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.210; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10.29), much as many Westerners today enjoy the violence of the entertainment media (although ancient Christians refused to attend such events except when they themselves were forced to be the victims). Roman gladiatorial shows were also held in the theater at Ephesus during many festivals (as well as in Corinth). It is unlikely, however, that Paul was literally cast to beasts in that arena. The victims were not supposed to survive the maulings, and as a Roman citizen Paul would have been exempt from this punishment. Philosophers employed the image of battling such beasts (usually irrational people), and Paul here probably describes his opposition in similarly graphic terms (cf. similarly Ps 22:6, 12-13, 16, 20-21; 74:19). “In human terms” in verse 32 may mean “figuratively” (contrary to most translations; cf. 9:8; Rom 6:19; Gal 3:15). But if Paul had no future hope, instead of facing affliction, he may as well have simply indulged his passions, a sentiment often attributed (with some distortion) to Epicurean philosophers but lived out by many Greek and Roman men at wild parties. The same perspective was attributed to others who denied an afterlife (Wisdom of Solomon 2:1-20; 1 Enoch 102:6-8). He quotes Isaiah 22:13 (with its context about judgment on the wicked); cf. Sirach 14:16; Luke 12:19. (The Old Testament often uses the language of eating and drinking in a neutral way—Eccles 2:24; 5:18-19; cf. 3:12— but without God it is never enough for life—Isa 22:12-14; Eccles 11:7-12:14; cf. 7:2, 14.)⁴¹

III. The Nature of the Resurrection Body (1 Corinthians 15:35-58)

A. Questioning the nature of the resurrection body (15:35-41)

What body comes forth from the grave?

Joseph Smith taught the doctrine that the infant child that was laid away in death would come up in the resurrection as a child; and, pointing to the mother of a lifeless child, he said to her: "You will have the joy, the pleasure, and satisfaction of nurturing this child, after its resurrection, until it reaches the full stature of its spirit." There is restitution, there is growth, there is development, after the resurrection from death.⁴²

How is this to be done? By what means will this work be completed?

President Benson, quoting Brigham Young, taught:

It is supposed by this people that we have all the ordinances in our possession for life and salvation, and exaltation, and that we are administering in these ordinances. This is not the case. We are in possession of all the ordinances that can be administered in the flesh; but there are other ordinances and administrations that must be administered beyond this world. I know you would ask what they are. I will mention one. We have not, neither can we receive here, the ordinance and the keys of the resurrection. They will be given to those who have passed off this stage of action and have received their bodies again, as many have already done and many more will. They will be ordained, by those who hold the keys of

⁴¹ Keener, p. 494.

⁴² Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 445-6.

the resurrection, to go forth and resurrect the Saints just as we receive the ordinance of baptism, then the keys of authority to baptize others.⁴³

Bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial σώματα ἐπουράνια καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια (1 Cor. 15.40)

For more on this idea, see D&C 76. Joseph Fielding McConkie offered this commentary:

“All are called forth from the grave, and all except those who are sons of perdition are redeemed from the 'second death' (D&C 76:36-38), but all are not resurrected on equal grounds. At this point our redemption becomes conditional. We cannot concoct a doctrine of redemption that denies the necessity of repentance and obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Alma explains the principle thus: And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also. Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment, which also was eternal as the life of the soul should be, affixed opposite to the plan of happiness, which was as eternal also as the life of the soul. (Alma 42:15-16.) Thus it is that the atonement of Christ cleanses us from the effects of sin, but only through our own suffering and repentance do we obtain the personal strength to overcome sin. The kingdom of heaven cannot be made up of those who have an appetite and propensity for sin, notwithstanding the goodness and perfection of Christ. Each of its citizens must claim their own victory over the powers of the flesh through personal striving and ultimately by virtue of the mercy and goodness of Christ.

The purpose of the plan of salvation is not alone to free us from the dominion and power of the adversary, nor to cleanse us from the effects of our transgressions. Though it does both of these, it also extends to us the opportunity to advance from grace to grace that we might obtain the fulness of the Father (see D&C 93:11-20). In describing those who obtain the highest degree of glory, modern revelation declares, These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood (D&C 76:69). The Atonement, then, does more than free us from the dominion of Satan; it extends to us the opportunity to become as God is!

The Atonement embraces all of God’s creation in both the plant and animal world. It brings victory over everything that is mortal. It overcomes all the vicissitudes of the flesh. Not only through the Atonement do we conquer disease and aging, death and suffering in all its shades and colors, but we also enjoy the restoration of spirit and body and thereby the perpetuation of eternal covenants between husbands and wives, children and parents. Indeed, all things that pertain to our religion are only appendages to that great atoning sacrifice. Gospel principles receive life and breath and substance only to the degree that they are anchored and tied to the Atonement (see *Teachings*, p. 121).⁴⁴

B. Illustrations from nature to explain the transformation of the body (15:42-49)

“The last man Adam was made a quickening spirit” (1 Cor. 15.45)

⁴³ Brigham Young, *Discourses*, 397-8; See also *Ensign*, May 1977, 49.

⁴⁴ Joseph Fielding McConkie, [Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer](#), Bookcraft, 1996, p. 94-95.

Bruce R. McConkie taught, “Christ is the Second Adam. As the first mortal man is called Adam (Moses 1:34), so the first Man to come forth in resurrected immortality is also called Adam, or more specifically the Second Adam. Adam's mortal body was a natural body, Christ's immortal one a spiritual body, meaning a body in which flesh and bones and spirit are inseparably connected. (D. & C. 88:26-28; 93:33.)

"Paul uses this comparison between Adam and Christ to teach some of the basic truths about the resurrection, to teach some of the basic events that take place when a body is sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body. 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body,' he says. 'And so it is written, 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. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.' (1 Cor. 15:44-49.)"⁴⁵

C. The victory over death and the transformation of believers (15:50-57)

lo, I tell you a secret; we indeed shall not all sleep, and we all shall be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, in the last trumpet, for it shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we -- we shall be changed: for it behoveth this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality; and when this corruptible may have put on incorruption, and this mortal may have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the word that hath been written, `The Death was swallowed up -- to victory; where, O Death, thy sting? where, O Hades, thy victory?` (1 Cor. 15:51-55 YLT)

It is from passages like this that some scholars have argued that Paul and other Christians believed that Jesus would come back in their lifetimes. Bart D. Ehrman wrote:

After Jesus' death, those who believed in him established communities of followers throughout the Mediterranean. We have a good idea what these Christians believed, because some of them have left us writings. What is striking is that these earliest writings are imbued with apocalyptic thinking. The earliest Christians were Jews who believed that they were living at the end of the age and that Jesus himself was to return from heaven as a cosmic judge of the earth, to punish those who opposed God and to reward the faithful (see, e.g., 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-57—writings from our earliest Christian author, Paul). The church that emerged in Jesus' wake was apocalyptic.⁴⁶

Christians in Paul's day and ours have held beliefs that Jesus is coming soon. Ehrman, in another book, explains:

What most of the millions of people who believe that Jesus is coming back soon, in our lifetime, don't realize is that there have always been Christians who thought this about their own lifetimes. This was a prominent view among conservative Christians in the early twentieth century, in the late nineteenth century, in the eighteenth century, in the twelfth century, in the second century, in the first century—in fact, in just about every century... Paul himself thought the end was coming in his lifetime. Nowhere is this more clear than in one of the letters we are sure he wrote, 1 Thessalonians. Paul wrote the Christians in Thessalonica, because some of them had become disturbed over the death of a number of

⁴⁵ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., Bookcraft, 1966, p. 685. In 1 Cor. 15:45b, Paul states that ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν – this is translated in the KJV as “the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” It can also be read as “the last Adam into the life making spirit.” The Greek verb ζωοποιῶν is the participle of ζωοποιέω which can be read as creating life.

⁴⁶ Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 139.

their fellow believers. When he converted these people, Paul had taught them that the end of the age was imminent, that they were soon to enter the kingdom when Jesus returned. But members of the congregation had died before it happened. Had they lost out on their heavenly reward? Paul writes to assure the survivors that, no, even those who have died will be brought into the kingdom. In fact, when Jesus returns in glory on the clouds of heaven, “the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thes. 4:17). Read the verse carefully: Paul expects to be one of the ones who will still be alive when it happens.

He goes on to say that it will be a sudden, unexpected event. That day will come “like a thief in the night,” and when people think that all is well, “sudden destruction will come upon them” (5:2–3). The Thessalonians should be alert and prepared, because, as with the labor pains of a pregnant woman, it is possible to know that it will come very soon, but you can’t predict the exact moment.

It is precisely this emphasis on the suddenness of the reappearance of Jesus, which will catch people by surprise, that makes the second letter that Paul allegedly wrote to the Thessalonians so interesting. This too is a book written about the second coming of Jesus, but now a completely different problem is being addressed. The readers have been “led astray” by a letter that has apparently been forged in Paul’s name (2:2) saying that “the day of the Lord is at hand.” The author of 2 Thessalonians, claiming to be Paul, argues that the end is not, in fact, coming right away. Certain things have to happen first. There will be some kind of political or religious uprising and rebellion, and an Antichrist like figure will appear who will take his seat in the Temple of Jerusalem and declare himself to be God. Only then will the “Lord Jesus” come to “destroy him with the breath of his mouth” (2:3–8).⁴⁷

D. Exhortation to steadfastness and assurance in the resurrection hope (15:58)

1 Corinthians 16: Stand fast in the faith

The main message of 1 Corinthians 16 revolves around practical instructions and closing remarks given by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian church. Paul highlights the practical aspects of Christian living, such as generosity, support for fellow believers, hospitality, and unity within the church community. Paul’s instructions and closing remarks serve to encourage the Corinthian believers in their faith, remind them of their responsibilities, and express his love and concern for them.

I. Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-4)

A. Instructions for setting aside a collection (16:1-2)

⁴⁷ Bart D. Ehrman, *Forged: Writing in the Name of God*, p. 121-123 electronic version. It is for the reasons outlined that Ehrman contends that Paul did not write 2 Thessalonians. He explains, “Paul probably did not write 2 Thessalonians. That makes one feature of the letter particularly intriguing. At the end of the letter the author insists that he is Paul and gives a kind of proof: “I Paul write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write” (3:17). This means that “Paul” had been dictating his letter to a scribe who had written it all down, until the end, when Paul signed off with his own hand. Readers of the letter could see the change of handwriting and recognize Paul’s, authenticating this letter as really his, as opposed to the forged one mentioned in 2:2. What is peculiar is that the author claims that this is his invariant practice. But it is not how most of the undisputed letters of Paul end, including 1 Thessalonians. The words are hard to account for as Paul’s, but they make sense if a forger is trying to convince his readers that he really was Paul. But perhaps the queen doth protest too much.” Whether or not Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians, Ehrman does make strides in his proving that Paul believed that Jesus would come back in his lifetime.

B. The purpose of the collection and its intended recipients (16:3-4)

II. Travel Plans and Visiting Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:5-9)

A. Paul's personal travel plans and intentions (16:5-7)

The easiest way to travel to Corinth from Ephesus was to cross over by boat from Troas in Asia Minor to Philippi in Macedonia, then to take the westward road and turn south into Greece (as in Paul's second missionary journey in Acts; see Acts 16:7-9). Paul later delayed this planned visit partly to avoid having to confront them forcefully (2 Cor 1:15-23).⁴⁸

And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. (1 Cor. 16.6)

The seas were closed for travel in the winter; if Paul were in Corinth once the seas closed, he would stay there until they opened in the spring (cf. later Acts 20:2-3). Paul is writing in the spring (16:8), many months before the next winter. Warm letters between friends often discussed plans to spend time together (e.g., Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.9.1; 7.15.1; 8.15.2). Hospitality was important in antiquity, and the Corinthians would feel honored to be able to provide hospitality to a prominent teacher (especially the founder of their church). "Send me on my way"⁴⁹ (nasb, nrsv) means that the church will provide for Paul's travel.⁵⁰

B. The importance of the Lord's will in determining his movements (16:8-9)

III. Instructions Regarding Timothy, Apollos, and Stephanas (1 Corinthians 16:10-18)

A. Reception and support for Timothy (16:10-11)

B. The arrival of Apollos and the call for hospitality (16:12)

C. Stand in the faith (16:13)

1 Cor. 16.13 Greek: Γρηγορεῖτε **στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει ἀνδρίζεσθε** κραταιοῦσθε "Be awake! **Stand firm in the faith! Be men!** Be strong!" (my translation)

Some of Paul's exhortation here would be suitable in a military setting. "Act like men" (nasb) usually meant "be courageous" (nrsv); the expression did not necessarily connote masculinity, although it was used for courage because most people in antiquity associated courage with masculinity.⁵¹

D. Commendation and acknowledgment of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:15-18)

1 Cor. 16.15-18. Here Paul makes another recommendation (see 1 Cor. 16.10-12). "Firstfruits" (literally, in 16:15) was the beginning of a larger harvest; Achaia was the province that made up much of Greece, and of which Corinth was the chief city. (As a free city, Athens was technically excluded from the province in

⁴⁸ Keener, p. 496.

⁴⁹ ἵνα ὑμεῖς **με προπέμψητε** οἷ ἂν πορεύωμαι "in order that you **might send me** on my way wherever I might go" (end of 1 Cor. 16.6, my translation). We have a couple of subjunctive verbs here with the 2nd plural of προπέμπω and the 1st person singular subjunctive of πορεύω. I agree with Keener here that Paul is gently asking the saints in Corinth to cover his passage to their location, as well as wherever else he needs to go.

⁵⁰ Keener, p. 496.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 496.

this period; cf. Acts 17:34.) Because mail in antiquity had to be carried by travelers, and these people are returning to Corinth from Paul, we may safely assume that they brought the letter we know as 1 Corinthians back to Corinth.⁵²

Issues of authority – 1 Cor. 16.18

Stephanas, mentioned earlier as a leader,⁵³ is identified as someone to whom the Corinthians should submit. He, along with two companions, had arrived to discuss the issues in Corinth with Paul, as they were preparing to return to the Corinthian branch under Paul's directive: ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιοῦτους "Therefore, give recognition to men such as these" (1 Cor. 16.18, my translation). In 1 Corinthians, Paul not only emphasizes the importance of Christian unity but also underscores the need for unity to be achieved by following local officers who are supervised by apostolic authority.

Overall, the lack of unity in Corinth was closely tied to matters of authority. The presence and support of key leaders, along with Paul's instructions regarding submission to local officers, were aimed at addressing this underlying problem and fostering unity within the Corinthian community.

IV. Final Greetings and Closing Remarks (1 Corinthians 16:19-24)

1 Cor. 16.19. The Corinthians knew Aquila and Priscilla and that they had moved to Ephesus (Acts 18:2-3, 18, 24-27). Churches met in homes, as many pagan religious associations did; this was a matter of convenience, economy and eventually of safety.⁵⁴

A. Greetings from churches and individuals (16:19-21)

1 Cor. 16.21. Most letters were written down by amanuenses, or scribes, and usually signed by the author. Writing something in one's own hand could communicate affection. A signature authorized the letter, as it does today.⁵⁵

B. Emphasis on love and unity (16:22)

"Paul's statement, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha' (1 Cor. 16:22), probably means, let him be accursed until the Lord comes. Maranatha, an Aramaic word meaning, O our Lord, come, appears to have been used by the primitive saints as a watchword or salutation by which they reminded each other of the promised second Coming. Paul's statement, 'The Lord is at hand' (Philip. 4:5), and John's, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus' (Rev. 22:20), carry the same hope and encouragement."⁵⁶

1 Cor. 16.22. Ancient people, including Jewish people, used curse invocations (here the *Aramaic anathema) as the opposite of blessings. "Marana tha" (GNT) is an Aramaic prayer, "Come, our Lord." That the Corinthians would understand it means that it is part of common tradition carried over from the early Palestinian Syrian church, which already recognized Jesus as "Lord" and as the one who would

⁵² Ibid., p. 497.

⁵³ See 1 Cor. 1.16 and 1 Cor. 16.15, 17.

⁵⁴ Keener, p. 497.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 497.

⁵⁶ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., Bookcraft, 1966, p. 34.

come (cf. Rev 22:20). (Thus Christians described his coming in the way that Jewish tradition expected God's coming for judgment.)⁵⁷

C. Final exhortations and instructions (16:13-14)

D. Blessings and greetings in Paul's own handwriting (16:21-24)

Was this letter written in Phillippi or from Ephesus?

There is evidence to suggest that 1 Corinthians was actually written from Ephesus instead of Philippi. It is worth noting that the footnotes found at the end of each Pauline epistle may not always be historically reliable. F.F. Bruce indicates that Paul wrote this letter when he was in Ephesus, "he planned to stay on at Ephesus for a few more weeks... until Pentacost (probably A.D. 55). Meanwhile, he sent Timothy ahead of him, and asked the Corinthians to make him feel at home⁵⁸ among them."⁵⁹

As to the small text at the end of 1 Corinthians, indicating that this letter was written in Philippi, Richard Lloyd Anderson explains, "One may be misled by the King James Version notes at the end of every letter. These little postscripts are called 'subscriptions' from the fact that copyists wrote them underneath or after the letters. But the sentence notes appear very late-their earliest form is fourth century, so they are merely scribes' opinions."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Keener, p. 497.

⁵⁸ See 1 Corinthians 16.5-11; Acts 19.22 and perhaps Philippians 2.19.

⁵⁹ F.F. Bruce, [Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free](#), Eerdmans, 1977, p. 334 electronic version.

⁶⁰ Richard Lloyd Anderson, [Understanding Paul](#), Deseret Book, 1983, p. 72.