

# 1 Corinthians 14:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

## Analysis

**Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen?**—Paul imagines someone giving eulogia (εὐλογία, "blessing, thanksgiving") in tongues. The person anaplerou ton topou tou idiōtou (ἀναπληροῦ τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἴδιώτου, "filling the place of the unlearned/uninitiated") can't say Amēn (Ἄμην, "so be it, truly").

Idiōtēs (ἴδιώτης) means a private person, layman, or here, someone ignorant of the tongue being spoken. **Seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest**—without understanding, the hearer can't affirm with "Amen," the congregational response of agreement (Deut 27:15-26). Uninterpreted tongues make corporate worship impossible; participants become spectators.

## Historical Context

'Amen' was the congregation's participatory response in Jewish and early Christian worship. Paul's point: tongues without interpretation reduces the congregation to mute observers, destroying participatory worship.

## Related Passages

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. What's the significance of saying 'Amen' in corporate worship?
2. How does uninterpreted speech turn participants into spectators?
3. What modern worship practices might similarly prevent congregational participation?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐπεὶ ἐὰν εὐλογήσῃς τῷ πνεύματι ὁ ἀναπληρῶν  
Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit shall he that occupieth  
G1893 G1437 G2127 G3588 G4151 G3588 G378

τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ Ἄμην ἐπὶ τῇ  
the room of the unlearned how say G3588 Amen at G3588 G5117 G2399 G4459 G2046 G281 G1909

σῇ εὐχαριστίᾳ ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν·  
thy giving of thanks seeing what thou sayest not he understandeth  
G4674 G2169 G1894 G5101 G3004 G3756 G1492

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 5:14** (Parallel theme): And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

**Psalms 106:48** (Blessing): Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

**1 Chronicles 16:36** (Blessing): Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

**Jeremiah 28:6** (Parallel theme): Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD'S house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place.

**1 Corinthians 11:24** (Parallel theme): And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

**Revelation 7:12** (Blessing): Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

**Nehemiah 8:6** (Blessing): And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

**Numbers 5:22** (Parallel theme): And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.