

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 topon tou idiōtou* (ἀναπληροῦ τὸν τόπον τοῦ ιδιώτου, "filling the place of the unlearned/uninitiated") can't say *Amēn* (Ἀμήν, "so be it, truly").

Idiōtēs (ιδιώτης) 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

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

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

ἐπεὶ	ἐὰν	εὐλογήσης	τῷ	πνεύματι	ὁ	ἀναπληρῶν			
Else	when	thou shalt bless	G3588	with the spirit	G3588	shall he that occupieth			
G1893	G1437	G2127		G4151		G378			
τὸν	τόπον	τοῦ	ἰδιώτου	πῶς	ἔρεῖ	τὸ Ἀμήν	ἐπὶ	τῇ	
G3588	the room	G3588	of the unlearned	how	say	G3588	Amen	at	G3588
	G5117		G2399	G4459	G2046		G281	G1909	
σῇ	εὐχαριστία	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

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.