

NOTES ON I CORINTHIANS 14

By Donald Townsley

I. I CORINTHIANS 14 IS A RECORD OF HOW A TEACHING SERVICE WAS TO BE REGULATED WHERE SPIRITUAL GIFTS WERE EXERCISED.

1. These teaching services were conducted so the members could "learn" God's will.
2. So all things were to be done "*decently and in order*"; so learning could take place -- I Cor. 14: 40
 - (1) The speaker was to:
 1. EDIFY -- I Cor. 14:3, 5, 12
 2. EXHORT -- I Cor. 14:3
 3. COMFORT -- I Cor. 14:3; 14:31
 - (2) To do this, he must:
 1. Speak where men could understand him -- 14:2; 14:9; 14: 15 - 16; 14:19
 2. If a man could speak in an unknown tongue and had no one to interpret for him, he was to "*keep silence*" in the assembly -- I Cor. 14:28
 - (1) Because speaking in a tongue that no one understood would not edify the church -- 14:3; 14:9
 3. All members were to learn and be comforted by the teaching -- I Cor. 14:31
 4. Also, if a man was speaking and another man sitting by received a revelation, "*let the first*" man speaking keep silence and let the man who received the revelation speak -- I Cor. 14:30
 - (3) In one teaching service they were to have no more than three speakers -- 14:27
 1. These speakers were to speak one at a time -- 14:27
 2. They were to have one to interpret -- 14:27
 3. The congregation was to give attention to what the two or three prophets said -- 14:29
 4. Each prophet could control his speaking; his speaking was not an irresistible compulsion -- 14:32
 5. They must follow this arrangement in these assemblies because "*God is not the author of confusion, but of peace*" -- 14:33
 6. In these "teaching services" where spiritual gifts were being exercised, the women were not to speak in tongues under any circumstances -- 14: 34 - 35
 - (1) In these assemblies he said, "*Let your women keep silence*". . . "*for it is not permitted unto them to speak*" --14:34
 1. That is, it was not permitted for them to speak in tongues because tongue speaking is what is under consideration in the context.
 2. They were "*commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law*" 14:34; For them to speak would have been a usurpation of man's authority.
 - (2) These prophets wives were not to disturb the teaching services with their questions; they were to ask their husbands at home -- 14:35
 - (3) It was a shame for the women to do this in these services -- 14:35

II. WOMEN TEACHERS

1. Truth between two extremes:
 - (1) One extreme would allow women to be preachers to the whole assembly.
 - (2) The other extreme would prohibit a woman from teaching other women and children, or asking a question in a Bible class.
2. The QUESTION is: "Does I Corinthians 14: 33 - 34 forbid the woman from speaking at all in any assembly?"
3. We know, from other New Testament teaching, that she is NOT prohibited from speaking in every assembly:
 - (1) The woman is to speak when she sings in the assembly -- Eph. 5:19
 - (2) The woman is to teach when she sings in the assembly -- Col. 3:16
 - (3) The woman can be asked a question about her faith in Christ in the assembly, and she can answer the question -- Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10; Matt. 10:32
 - (4) The woman can confess her sins in the assembly -- I John 1:9; James 5:16
4. A Bible class today does not partake of the nature of the assembly of I Cor. 14.
5. In a Bible class, a woman is under the control, direction and authority of man -- the teacher.
 - (1) As long as she asks and answers questions "in silence or quietness with all subjection" -- I Tim. 2:11 -- she does no wrong.
6. In these "teaching services" of I Corinthians 14, where spiritual gifts were being exercised, the prophet's wives were not to speak.
 - (1) These wives were not to disturb these teaching services with their questions; they were to ask their husbands at home -- 14:35
 1. For them to speak would have been a sinful usurpation of their husband's status as HEAD -- 14: 34 - 35