

The Charity Chapter | 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

- Verses 1-7 included on session 29
- Verse 8 –
 - Because the context of the charity chapter is manifestations of the Spirit, Paul has reminded the Corinthians that these manifestations without love are nothing more than an annoyance. Now Paul begins to say that **charity never faileth** but the manifestation gifts will cease.
 - Paul says that **prophecies, they shall fail**. The same Greek word is used of **knowledge**, translated **it shall vanish away**.
 - Words of Knowledge and a prophetic word are similar, and both had (at the time of Paul's writing) a limited time of usefulness.
 - The word καταργέω [katargeo] is *the ultimate lack of effectiveness*. Young's Literal says *shall become useless*.
 - Of the gift of **tongues** (which, in chapter 14 will have a similar function of prophecy/knowledge) will also **cease**.
 - Here Paul uses the word παύω [pauo], from which we get *pause*.
 - The Greek word, unlike the English, does not carry the idea of a temporary stop, but rather a total stop (the word is used 15 times in the New Testament and never involves a *pause* but always a *cessation*).
 - The question for the Bible interpreter is not *whether* these manifestation gifts will stop, but *when* they have or will stop.
 - One who believes that the manifestation gifts have stopped is called a *cessationist*, one who believes they continue is a *continuationist*.
 - A continuationist is, by definition, a charismatic.
 - A cessationist must build an argument for *when the gifts ceased*.
 - A continuationist must build an argument for *when the gifts will cease*.
- Verses 9-10 –
 - The cessation comes **when that which is perfect is come**. When the perfect comes, then the manifestation gifts **shall be done away** (using *kataergo* as in v. 8).
 - Is the **perfect** a reference to the Second Coming, the eternal age, or something else?
 - The Second Coming seems to fit, since later Paul says that after this perfection we will see **face to face** (v. 12). There is presumably no prophecy in the millennium. However, during the millennium total perfection of all things has not been reached, and Paul speaks of **that which is perfect**.
 - The Eternal Age seems to fit, but since this is the period in which the entire old order is passed away, it does not make sense to specify the manifestation gifts as passing away. There would be no logic in Paul's argument.
 - The completion of the Scriptures could be in view since the manifestation gifts are related to revelation. When the New Testament was closed, there was a prohibition against further revelation (Rev. 22:18). The word **perfect** is fitting much more fitting of the Scriptures than of

the Second Coming/Millennium because the word τέλειος [teleios] refers to the *end*, in this case, the end of revelation. Neither the Second Coming nor the Eternal Age are the *end*.

- Further ruling out the Second Coming or the Eternal Age is the fact that **faith, hope and charity** will remain even when **that which is perfect** shall cease (vv. 10, 13).
 - Paul says that **faith is the substance of things hoped for** (Heb. 11:1) and in Romans 8:24 Paul says **hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?**
 - Therefore, the term **face to face** (v. 12) must not imply that this perfection is the second coming, for hope will no longer abide during that time.
- Therefore, due to context (prophetic revelations) and theological logic (hope remains), the **perfect** must be the perfect and final revelation of God, that is, the Scriptures.
- Since the perfect Scriptures have now come, the manifestation gifts have ceased.
- Verse 11 - It is likely not coincidental that Paul writes of speech, understanding, and thinking. He began the chapter with **tongues** followed by **prophecy** followed by **understand[ing] all mysteries**. Note the parallelism of thought.
- Verse 12 –
 - Paul uses an illustration, and this illustration must not be pressed to the point that it clouds the instruction.
 - Some have concluded that verse 10 makes reference to the Second Coming due to the **face to face** reference of this verse.
 - However, Paul is simply illustrating that in the Corinthian days, they did not have the full revelation, and understanding the completeness of God's will in the days prior to the Biblical canon was as different as seeing **through a glass, darkly** and seeing **face to face**.
 - Prior to the full revelation, Paul (and thus the Corinthians) only knew **in part**, but **then** (when the perfect is come, v. 10) Paul would **know even as also I am known**.
 - Rather than being a reference to our identity in heaven, this speaks of our knowledge of God's revelation today (the Scriptures having been given).
 - Today, we know God's revelation to the point that we **may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works** (2 Tim. 3:16). If we are able to know the revelation to the point of perfection, then we also **know even as also I am known** (known fully by God).
- Verse 13 –
 - In opposition to the manifestation gifts, there are three things which **abideth** (remain): **faith, hope, charity**. Of these three, **the greatest of these is charity**. Why? because faith and hope will both go away in the Eternal Age.
 - In the *age of the Kingdom offer*, there were manifestations of the Spirit to guide, encourage, prove, and teach. Today we have faith, hope, and charity. We place our faith in the truth of the Scriptures, our hope is in the blood of Jesus Christ and His coming for His church, and charity is the full expression of Christian love until Jesus comes.