

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

I Corinthians 13: More Than a Love Chapter

Charity: In Christian circles, I Corinthians 13 is referred to as the 'Love Chapter,' because it gives us a true glimpse of what God's love looks like. The term charity denotes an action of lovingkindness. It's not simply a warm, fuzzy feeling, nor impulsive emotions that generate this type of behavior. Instead, this love is a decision based on faith. It is Christ, the Word, living within us. The motive is the unselfish love of Christ, empowering us to actively serve: *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."* (I Cor. 4-7)

God produces this love in saints slowly, over time. As we read and meditate, believing and living it, we're conformed to Christ's image and develop His mind. In Ephesians, Paul encourages the saints to apply charity: *"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."* (Eph. 5:1-2)

The purpose: While I Corinthians 13 does define godly love, in the context it is really a rebuke to Corinth. Previous chapters in I Corinthians address fleshly issues in the saints, such as self-centeredness, exhibiting envy, strife, and division, exalting themselves, and being puffed up. (I Cor. 3:3, I Cor. 4:6)

Thus, the Corinth saints loved displaying spiritual gifts, but did it to exalt themselves, without charity for others. Therefore, the chapter begins by addressing 'the fruit' of how they manifested signs: *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* (I Cor. 13:1-3) We too can learn from this, that is, to be prayerfully aware of our own motives.



The Corinthians were not living even the basic teaching Paul gave to them (Acts 18:11), let alone being motivated to live by charity. They were driven by the flesh, being puffed up and unthankful, not glorifying God nor serving others.

When Paul defined charity in Verses 4-7, he was actually explaining that what they were doing was not charitable at all. Re-read these verses and notice how the Corinthians were told to be longsuffering and kind, but **not** to envy, vaunt (pride or boast), be puffed up, have unseemly (inappropriate) behavior, be self-seeking, easily provoked, ponder evil thoughts, nor rejoice in iniquity (immoral/grossly unfair). Paul did give them a synopsis of godly love: *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind...Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."* (Vs. 4,7)

I Corinthians 13 teaches much more than godly love. This chapter is sandwiched in between two chapters about spiritual gift use. I Corinthians 12 sets the groundwork: specific responsibilities within the Godhead. Chapter 14 reproves and corrects the use of the gifts at Corinth. It is in I Corinthians 13 we find the priority motivation to serve. Charity is to be the drive for whatever is done, including spiritual gifts. What can this teach us? This love is also to be the motive developed as we mature in the Word to serve.

To Do: Look at Chapters 1-12 to uncover how Paul helped the Corinthians correct selfish behaviors. i.e. I Cor. 3:3-4, 4:6, 5:1, 8:1. Is this applicable to you?



Search it out!

Living As Who You Are In Christ

I Corinthians 13: Motivated by Charity, Which is Godly Love

Examine verses!



Chapter 13 was meant to help the Corinthians correct their fleshly attitude. The book of I Corinthians addressed beliefs/views that needed transforming: to exalt God, rather than men (not even themselves), submit to the authority of sound doctrine given to them by the Apostle Paul, and to have the proper motivation of charity, in all that they do. As their thinking and living adjusted, they would be able to make wise judgments, discerning how to live unto God, serving in love. Prayerfully, read through I Corinthians 13 for yourself to glean what the Spirit has to teach you.

1. Define key terms to clarify the chapter: Use a dictionary to define: charity, tongues, prophecy, and one or two words you would like to know better in this chapter. Terms can have unexpected meanings.

2. Search for additional insight: Read Verses 4-6 and look back in Chapters 1-12 to find places where the Corinthians acted uncharitably, as indicated in this section i.e. envy, puffed up, unseemly.

3. Define words from verses: Look at Verse 4-8 and use what is given in the passage to write a Bible definition of charity. Then, compare it to a Bible dictionary. Does this help your confidence in the meaning?

4. Notice lists: **a)** Jot down the list of things Paul indicated will pass away in Verses 8-9. Think about how it relates to needing something that is perfectly complete. **b)** Read Verse 11: When a child becomes a man, he is to put aside three things listed in Vs. 11; list them. As he matures in the perfect Word, he is transformed and childish things are put away. (Romans 12)

5. Ask yourself questions and do research, when a passage seems difficult to understand: Read Verses 8-10 to gain the context. **a)** What is it that the Corinthians knew and prophesied in part? The context will help you. **b)** What is 'that which is perfect'? Look at the items listed in Verse 8 to realize what is 'in part,' that needs completion in order for prophecies, tongues, and knowledge to no longer be needed. Use a dictionary to find how 'perfect' is defined. Also, a concordance can be helpful to find verses that Paul used that contain the words 'perfect' or 'complete.'

***Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights.**

Why & When Spiritual Gifts Ended

Spiritual gifts vanished when God's purpose for them ended. (The gifts were temporarily used to teach Israel as God set them aside and He began the dispensation of grace.) God had three main uses for these gifts:

1) To establish Paul's authority: Sign gifts proved Paul was God's spokesperson. *"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."* (II Cor. 12:12) God began this program through Paul, specifically to the Gentiles, all nations of the world.

2) To be used as a temporary measure until 'complete instructions' were written for this new dispensation of grace: Paul's authoritative writings completed the Word to us, enabling us to 'perfect' our faith. *"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God."* (Col. 1:25) Gifts vanished just as foretold, when Scripture was completed: *"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."* (I Cor. 13:10) In the context, 'that which is perfect' refers to the completed, perfect Word of God.

Now, saints no longer need 'special' words of wisdom, additional knowledge, faith, foretelling prophecy, or discerning spirits. Instead, in this time of grace, a person becomes a believer, trusts Christ's payment for their sin, then immediately they're given the Spirit. (II Cor. 1:22) The Spirit quickens their dead spirit, giving it life and the ability to learn the deep things of God. (I Cor. 2:10-12) God's way of dealing with believers today is for them to read the Scripture, believe it, and yield so the powerful Word is taken into their inner man. This process replaced the need for many of the spiritual gifts. **To Do:** Do a word search on 'perfect,' 'perfection,' and 'excellent.' How do they relate to the Scripture (Eph. 4:12-15)? (Article cont.)





3) To teach Israel and provoke them to emulation: God used Paul's ministry and spiritual gifts in the Body to provoke unbelieving Israel to be saved. He wanted them to emulate (follow) the Gentiles, believing Paul's gospel message, understanding the crosswork of Christ. This provoking ministry to Israel began at their fall (Acts 8), after Stephen was stoned: *"...through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy...If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them."* (Rom. 11:11,14)

Paul preached to the Jews first in the Acts; this showed their blindness to Truth. He also used miracles and tongues through the Gentiles to provoke Israel to know that God justly set them aside. Acts 28:28 is God's final warning to Israel, explaining His new purpose and program to the Gentiles. God's use of spiritual gifts to provoke Israel was now no longer needed. Their judicial blindness was complete. (Rom. 11:25)

As the Corinthians responded to God's warnings, they should have matured to understand that spiritual gifts ought to be put away: *"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I **put away** childish things."* (I Cor. 13:11) Lusting after things, such as sign gifts, had enticed this Church to become self-focused. They exalted their flesh, rather than understand the true purpose of healings, miracles, & tongues.

As the Corinthians matured in sound doctrine, they would have realized that God was now working differently, in the Body of Christ. The doctrine for this present dispensation of grace is Romans through Philemon. God's power is the preaching of the cross. (I Cor. 1:18) This 'gospel of Christ' message works His power in and through the inner man, as they believe it. God remains mighty today, even though spiritual gifts passed away. God now manifests His power/wisdom differently, in the inner man.

As You Grow Spiritually, Christ Is Seen



Paul taught the Corinthians that there was a proper time to speak, understand, and think as a child. *"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."* (vs. 11) The time was soon to come that they should grow up unto spiritual adults.

The Corinthians were to realize that, as they are 'conformed to the image of Christ,' their speech, understanding, and thinking would change. *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son..."* (Rom. 8:29)



When would this image change happen? When God completed writing the Word through the Apostle Paul. Then, saints would have the full doctrine to be *"...transformed by the renewing of your mind..."* (Rom. 12:2) The Spirit uses the Word to mature us in the gospel.

I Corinthians 12:12 says, *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."* Once Paul finished writing God's Word, saints from that point forward could grow up in the completed doctrine unto the mirror image of



Christ. *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* (II Cor. 3:18) Saints could read and study the fullness of the doctrine and be transformed: *"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."* (II Tim. 1:13)

As we renew our mind in sound teaching (Romans-Philemon), we grow and our inner man is changed. If we could look in a glass (mirror), we would see Christ formed in us: *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* (Eph. 4:15). God's purpose for us now is to grow!

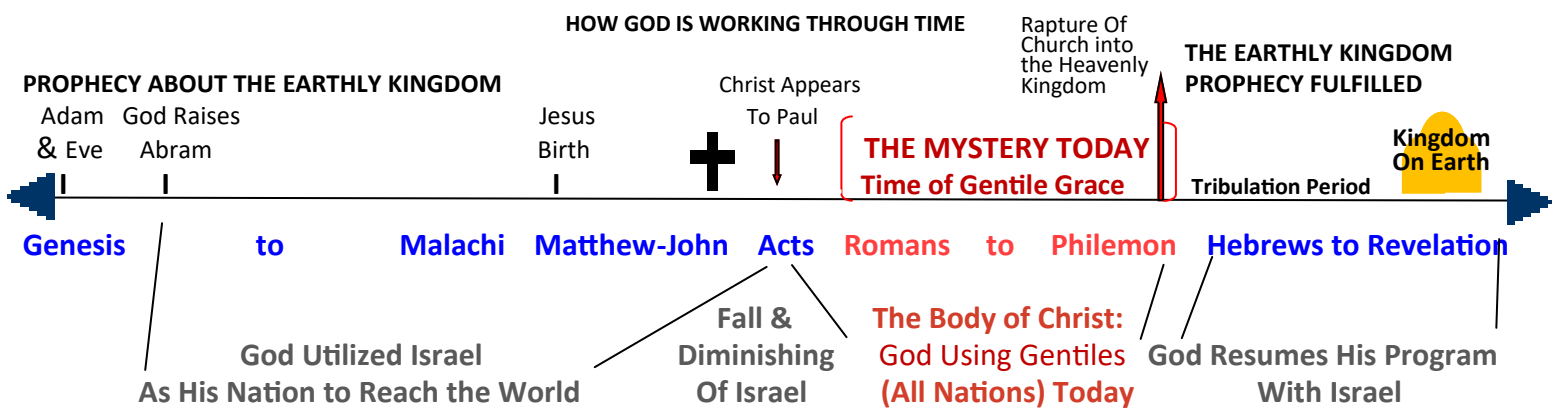
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To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

The Simple Design of the Bible



How Can This Timeline Help Us Understand the Bible?

It is easy to be confused and give up on reading the Bible when we can't seem to understand how it is organized. Sometimes it's overwhelming. Apparent contradictions and differences in how God deals with man between the Old and New Testaments can be frustrating. When we learn how to 'rightly divide the Word,' the context of passages can be considered and clarity is obtained. *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (II Tim. 2:15) Take a moment to look at the chart above. Notice God dealt with Israel from Genesis 12-Acts 8 (in blue), and He resumes this Jewish program after the Rapture, from Hebrews to Revelation. Today is 'The Mystery' program to Gentiles (in red); Romans through Philemon.

Once students understand how the Bible is laid out, simply by how God dealt with man over time, they can know where to read to obtain direct teaching written directly 'to them.' All the Bible is for our learning, but we need to realize what is 'to us.' (Rom. 15:4) Make time to read all the Scriptures, but know that many books are written to Israel, specifically. Israel fell from their elevated position as God's special nation, in Acts 8. God then raised Paul, who wrote Romans-Philemon directly to the Body of Christ. **To Do:** Look at the context of a few books in the Bible (read the first chapter of each). Next month we'll continue on how to study the Bible, rightly divided. (Contact us if you'd like more in-depth info.)

Read the Bible Through This Year!

Think about joining us in January, 2019 to read God's Word through, a little each day. Do it at your own pace, or we would be glad to furnish a daily reading schedule. Contact us if you have questions or would like help: (804) 519-1210

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