

# The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 13

## ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Α' ΙΓ'

Each verse opens with the running Greek, an English translation, and a **discourse note** (its connective, relation, and role in the argument). Below follows the word-by-word breakdown in six tiers: gloss, case (color), parsing, *syntax*, **semantic force**, and a | lexical note.

CASE   ■ Nominative   ■ Genitive   ■ Dative   ■ Accusative   ■ Vocative   ■ Verb (no case)   ■ Indeclinable

Discourse notes head each verse: **relation** · connective · clause-flow. Indentation marks prominence — flush-left = main line of argument; indented = supporting / subordinate material.

### Discourse structure of the chapter

A · 13:1–3

#### **The indispensability of love: gifts without love are nothing**

Three escalating conditional sentences strip every prized charism of value apart from love: tongues of men and angels without love are mere noise (1); prophecy, all mysteries and knowledge, and mountain-moving faith without love leave one nothing (2); and even self-impoverishing almsgiving and self-surrender without love profit nothing (3). The structure moves from what one says, to what one knows and believes, to what one does — each climaxing in a verdict of emptiness.

B · 13:4–7

#### **The character of love: what love is, is not, and does**

Personifying love as the subject of a chain of verbs, Paul defines it not abstractly but behaviorally: two positive verbs open (love is patient, is kind), followed by a series of negations cataloguing what love refuses (envy, boasting, arrogance, indecency, self-seeking, irritability, account-keeping of evil), a contrast of joys (not at injustice but with truth), and a fourfold all-embracing summary — it bears, believes, hopes, endures all things.

C • 13:8–12

### The permanence of love: gifts will cease, love never falls

Love never fails, whereas prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will be abolished (8), for present knowledge and prophecy are partial (9) and the partial is set aside when the complete arrives (10). Two analogies illustrate: the child's speech outgrown in adulthood (11), and the dim mirror-image now versus the face-to-face seeing then — present partial knowing versus future full knowing, as we are known (12).

D • 13:13

### The supremacy of love: the abiding triad

The concluding maxim: now there abide faith, hope, and love — these three — but the greatest of these is love. Against the transient gifts, this triad endures; and among the enduring three, love holds the primacy, for it alone characterizes the consummated state in which faith yields to sight and hope to possession.

1 Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχῳν ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον.

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

CONDITION (PROTASIS–APODOSIS) Ἐὰν The first of three parallel conditional sentences. The hyperbolic protasis (even angelic eloquence) is offset by the stark apodosis: without love, the gifted speaker is reduced to mere percussive noise.

Ἐὰν

if

conjunction (introduces 3rd-class condition)

ἐάν: 'if' (εἰ + ἄν); with the subjunctive, the third-class condition — a hypothetical case entertained for the sake of argument.

ταῖς

the

Dative

article

γλώσσαις

tongues

Dative

dat. of means/instrument (with λαλῶ)

γλῶσσα: 'tongue, language'; here the charismatic 'tongues' of ch. 12–14, stretched hyperbolically to angelic speech.

τῶν

of

Genitive

article

## ἀνθρώπων

men

Genitive

*possessive/subjective genitive*

ἄνθρωπος: 'human being'; the genitive specifies whose languages — human ones, paired below with angelic.

## λαλῶ

I speak

Pres Act Subj 1 Sg · λαλέω

*verb of the protasis (subjunctive)*

→ customary present (durative)

λαλέω: 'speak, utter'; the verb characteristically used of speaking in tongues in these chapters.

## καὶ

and

*coordinating conjunction*

## τῶν

of the

Genitive

*article*

## ἀγγέλων

angels

Genitive

*possessive/subjective genitive (parallel to ἀνθρώπων)*

ἄγγελος: 'messenger, angel'; the hyperbole — even heavenly eloquence — heightens the contrast with the verdict that follows.

## ἀγάπην

love

Accusative

*direct object of ἔχω (fronted, emphatic)*

ἀγάπη: 'love'; self-giving, others-directed love — the keyword of the chapter, fronted here for emphasis.

## δὲ

but

*adversative conjunction*

δέ: 'but'; the pivot of each condition — the gift is granted, then countered by its loveless lack.

## μὴ

not

*negative particle (with subjunctive)*

μὴ: the negative proper to the subjunctive and to conditions.

## ἔχω

I have

Pres Act Subj 1 Sg · ἔχω

*verb of the protasis (subjunctive)*

→ stative present

ἔχω: 'have, hold'; here possession of love as an enduring inner reality, absent in the hypothesis.

## γέγονα

I have become

Perf Act Indic 1 Sg · γίνομαι

*main verb of the apodosis*

→ intensive perfect (resultant state)

γίνομαι: 'become, come to be'; the perfect underscores the settled condition that results — I stand reduced to mere noise.

## χαλκός

bronze/gong

Nominative

*predicate nominative*

χαλκός: 'bronze, copper'; an echoing brass — a resonating metal object, hence a 'sounding gong.'

## ἠχῶν

sounding/resounding

Pres Act Ptc · Nom Sg Masc · ἠχέω

*attributive participle (modifies χαλκός)*

→ present (durative)

ἠχέω: 'to sound, resound, echo' (cf. 'echo'); the empty, reverberating din of metal.

ἢ

or

*disjunctive conjunction*

κύμβαλον

cymbal

Nominative

*predicate nominative (coordinate with χαλκός)*

κύμβαλον: 'cymbal'; a hollow percussion instrument, here associated with clamorous pagan cultic noise.

ἀλαλάζον

clanging

Pres Act Ptc · Nom Sg Neut · ἀλαλάζω

*attributive participle (modifies κύμβαλον)*

→ present (durative)

ἀλαλάζω: 'raise a war-cry, clash, clang'; an onomatopoeic verb of loud, agitated sound.

2 καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν, καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι.

And if I have prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

CONDITION (ESCALATION) καὶ ἐὰν The second condition piles up the highest cognitive and spiritual gifts — prophecy, total knowledge, mountain-moving faith — and renders the same verdict, now upon the person himself: I am nothing.

καὶ

and

*connective conjunction*

ἐὰν

if

*conjunction (3rd-class condition)*

ἐὰν: 'if'; resumes the conditional pattern of v.1.

ἔχω

I have

Pres Act Subj 1 Sg · ἔχω

*verb of the protasis*

→ stative present

ἔχω: 'have, possess'; here of possessing a charisma.

προφητείαν

prophecy

Accusative

*direct object*

προφητεία: 'prophecy'; the gift Paul ranks highest among the speaking gifts (ch. 14) — yet still nothing without love.

καὶ

and

*coordinating conjunction*

εἶδῶ

I know/understand

Perf Act Subj 1 Sg · οἶδα

*verb of the protasis (coordinate)*

→ stative perfect (present sense)

οἶδα: 'know, understand'; the perfect-with-present-meaning verb of settled knowledge.

τὰ

the

Accusative

*article*

μυστήρια

mysteries

Accusative

*direct object of εἶδῶ*

μυστήριον: 'mystery'; God's hidden purposes now disclosed (cf. 2:7) — comprehensive insight is imagined here.

πάντα

all

Accusative

*attributive adjective (totality)*

πᾶς: 'all, every'; the sweeping totalizing that runs through the verse — all mysteries, all knowledge, all faith.

καὶ

and

*coordinating conjunction*

πᾶσαν

all

Accusative

*attributive adjective*

τὴν

the

Accusative

*article*

γνώσιν

knowledge

Accusative

*direct object of εἶδῶ (coordinate)*

γνώσις: 'knowledge'; a prized Corinthian commodity (8:1) — yet, like the mysteries, partial and passing (v.8).

καὶ

and

*connective conjunction*

ἐάν

if

*conjunction (renewed protasis)*

ἔχω

I have

Pres Act Subj 1 Sg · ἔχω

*verb of the protasis*

→ stative present

πᾶσαν

all

Accusative

*attributive adjective*

τὴν

the

Accusative

*article*

πίσιν

faith

Accusative

*direct object of ἔχω*

πίσις: here 'faith' in the charismatic, miracle-working sense (cf. 12:9; Matt 17:20) rather than saving trust.

ὥστε

so as

*conjunction (result, + infinitive)*

ὥστε: 'so that, so as to'; introduces actual or conceived result, here with the infinitive.

**ὄρη**

mountains

Accusative

*object of the infinitive μεθιστάναί*

ὄρος: 'mountain'; the proverbial measure of the impossible made possible by faith.

**μεθιστάναί**

to remove

Pres Act Inf · μεθίστημι

*infinitive of result (with ὥστε)*

→ present (durative)

μεθίστημι: 'transfer, remove, displace' (μετά + ἵστημι); to shift mountains from their place.

**ἀγάπην**

love

Accusative

*direct object of ἔχω (fronted)*

ἀγάπη: 'love'; again fronted, the missing variable that voids all the gifts.

**δὲ**

but

*adversative conjunction*

**μὴ**

not

*negative particle*

**ἔχω**

I have

Pres Act Subj 1 Sg · ἔχω

*verb of the protasis (negated)*

→ stative present

**οὐθέν**

nothing

Nominative

*predicate nominative*

οὐθείς: 'nothing, no one'; a Hellenistic by-form of οὐδείς — the verdict on the gifted but loveless self.

**εἰμι**

I am

Pres Act Indic 1 Sg · εἰμι

*main verb of the apodosis (copula)*

→ stative present

εἰμι: 'to be'; the equative verb — the loveless person is, in himself, nothing.

3 κὰν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου, καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.

And if I give away all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I hand over my body that I may boast, but have not love, I gain nothing.

CONDITION (CLIMAX) **κὰν** The third condition moves from speech (v.1) and knowledge (v.2) to the most heroic deeds — total almsgiving and bodily self-surrender. Even these, loveless, yield no profit: the climactic verdict shifts from 'noise' and 'nothing' to 'I gain nothing.'

κἄν

and if

conjunction (*crasis* καί + ἔάν)

κἄν: crasis of καί + ἔάν, 'and if, even if'; introduces the third protasis.

ψωμίσω

I give to feed

Aor Act Subj 1 Sg · ψωμιζω

verb of the protasis

→ constative aorist

ψωμιζω: 'feed by morsels, dole out food'; from ψωμός ('morsel') — to give away piecemeal as alms.

πάντα

all

Accusative

attributive adjective

πᾶς: 'all'; the totality again — everything one owns.

τὰ

the

Accusative

article (substantizes ptc.)

ὑπάρχοντά

possessions

Pres Act Ptc · Acc Pl Neut · ὑπάρχω

substantival participle (direct object)

→ present (durative)

ὑπάρχω: 'be present, belong'; the neuter plural participle τὰ ὑπάρχοντα is the idiom for 'one's goods, property.'

μου

my

Genitive

genitive of possession

καὶ

and

connective conjunction

ἐάν

if

conjunction (renewed protasis)

παραδῶ

I hand over

Aor Act Subj 1 Sg · παραδίδωμι

verb of the protasis

→ constative aorist

παραδίδωμι: 'hand over, deliver up' (παρά + δίδωμι); of surrendering one's body — to martyrdom or servitude.

τὸ

the

Accusative

article

σῶμά

body

Accusative

direct object of παραδῶ

σῶμα: 'body'; the self in its physical entirety, given over in the supreme sacrifice.

μου

my

Genitive

genitive of possession

<p>ἵνα that <i>conjunction (purpose, + subjunctive)</i></p> <p>ἵνα: 'in order that'; introduces the purpose of the self-surrender.</p>	<p>καυχῆσμαι I may boast Aor Mid Subj 1 Sg · καυχάομαι <i>verb of the purpose clause</i></p> <p>→ constative aorist</p> <p>καυχάομαι: 'boast, glory'; the better-attested reading (vs. καυθήσομαι 'be burned') — even sacrifice can be self-glorifying.</p>	<p>ἀγάπην love Accusative <i>direct object of ἔχω (fronted)</i></p> <p>ἀγάπη: 'love'; the indispensable element, absent once more.</p>	<p>δὲ but <i>adversative conjunction</i></p>
<p>μὴ not <i>negative particle</i></p>	<p>ἔχω I have Pres Act Subj 1 Sg · ἔχω <i>verb of the protasis (negated)</i></p> <p>→ stative present</p>	<p>οὐδὲν nothing Accusative <i>accusative of respect / direct object</i></p> <p>οὐδεὶς: 'nothing'; the adverbial accusative 'in no respect, not at all' — no profit whatsoever accrues.</p>	<p>ὠφελοῦμαι I am profited Pres Pass Indic 1 Sg · ὠφελέω <i>main verb of the apodosis</i></p> <p>→ gnomic present</p> <p>ὠφελέω: 'benefit, profit'; passive 'I am benefited' — the loveless giver gains nothing, however lavish the gift.</p>

#### 4 Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται,

Love is patient, love is kind; love does not envy, love does not boast, it is not puffed up,

DEFINITION BY PREDICATION (ASYNDETON) **ASYNDETON** The hymn's central panel begins. Love is personified as the subject of a string of verbs — two positive (patient, kind), then a cascade of negations. The threefold repetition of ἡ ἀγάπη lends solemn, almost liturgical cadence.

Ἡ

the

Nominative

article (with abstract noun)

ἀγάπη

love

Nominative

subject (of the whole series)

ἀγάπη: 'love'; now the grammatical subject, personified as an agent whose conduct is catalogued.

μακροθυμῆ

is patient

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · μακροθυμέω

main verb

→ gnomic present (timeless characterization)

μακροθυμέω: 'be long-suffering' (μακρός + θυμός); slow to anger, patient with persons rather than circumstances.

χρηστεύεται

is kind

Pres Mid Indic 3 Sg · χρηστεύομαι

main verb (asyndeton)

→ gnomic present

χρηστεύομαι: 'be kind, show oneself useful/gracious'; from χρηστός — a rare verb, perhaps Paul's own coinage, the active counterpart to patience.

ἡ

the

Nominative

article

ἀγάπη

love

Nominative

subject (repeated for cadence)

οὐ

not

negative particle (with indicative)

οὐ: the negative of fact, fitting the indicative verbs that describe love's actual conduct.

ζηλοῖ

does not envy

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · ζηλώω

main verb (negated)

→ gnomic present

ζηλώω: 'be zealous; be jealous, envy'; the negative sense here — love does not covet another's good.

ἡ

the

Nominative

article

ἀγάπη

love

Nominative

subject (third repetition)

οὐ

not

negative particle

περπερεύεται

does not boast

Pres Mid Indic 3 Sg · περπερεύομαι

main verb (negated)

→ gnomic present

περπερεύομαι: 'brag, vaunt oneself'; from πέρπερος ('braggart') — a NT hapax denoting self-display.

οὐ

not

*negative particle*

φυσιῶται

is not puffed up

Pres Pass Indic 3 Sg · φυσιῶ

*main verb (negated)*

→ gnomic present

φυσιῶ: 'inflate, puff up' (from φύσα, 'bellows'); a favorite Corinthian-letter word for arrogance (4:6; 8:1).

5 οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,

it is not indecent, it does not seek its own, it is not provoked, it does not keep account of the wrong,

DEFINITION BY PREDICATION (NEGATIONS CONTINUE) **ASYNDETON** The catalogue of negations proceeds: love is neither unseemly, self-seeking, irritable, nor a keeper of accounts against the wrongdoer. Each strikes at attitudes Paul has had to confront in Corinth.

οὐκ

not

*negative particle*

ἀσχημονεῖ

is not indecent

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · ἀσχημονέω

*main verb (negated)*

→ gnomic present

ἀσχημονέω: 'behave indecently, act unbecomingly'; from ἀσχήμων ('shapeless, unseemly') — love does nothing dishonorable.

οὐ

not

*negative particle*

ζητεῖ

does not seek

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · ζητέω

*main verb (negated)*

→ gnomic present

ζητέω: 'seek, strive for'; the heart of love's selflessness — it does not pursue its own interest (cf. 10:24, 33).

<p><b>τὰ</b> the things Accusative <i>article (substantival, neut. pl.)</i></p>	<p><b>ἑαυτῆς</b> of itself Genitive <i>reflexive pronoun (possessive genitive)</i></p> <p>ἑαυτοῦ: 'oneself'; τὰ ἑαυτῆς = 'its own things, its own interests' — what love declines to chase.</p>	<p><b>οὐ</b> not <i>negative particle</i></p>	<p><b>παροξύνεται</b> is not provoked Pres Pass Indic 3 Sg · παροξύνω <i>main verb (negated)</i></p> <p>→ <i>gnomic present</i></p> <p>παροξύνω: 'sharpen, irritate, provoke' (cf. 'paroxysm'); passive — love is not roused to sharp resentment.</p>
<p><b>οὐ</b> not <i>negative particle</i></p>	<p><b>λογίζεται</b> does not reckon Pres Mid Indic 3 Sg · λογίζομαι <i>main verb (negated)</i></p> <p>→ <i>gnomic present</i></p> <p>λογίζομαι: 'count, reckon, enter in a ledger'; a commercial metaphor — love keeps no record of the wrong done to it.</p>	<p><b>τὸ</b> the Accusative <i>article</i></p>	<p><b>κακόν</b> evil/wrong Accusative <i>direct object of λογίζεται</i></p> <p>κακός: 'bad, evil'; substantival τὸ κακόν = 'the wrong, the injury' — the item love refuses to tally.</p>

## 6 οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ·

it does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices together with the truth;

**ANTITHESIS OF JOYS** **ASYNDETON** A balanced contrast closes the negations: love takes no pleasure in wrongdoing but shares the joy of truth. The δὲ pivots from what love shuns to what it celebrates, preparing the positive summary of v.7.

<p>οὐ not <i>negative particle</i></p>	<p><b>χαίρει</b> does not rejoice Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · χαίρω <i>main verb (negated)</i> → <i>gnomic present</i> χαίρω: 'rejoice, be glad'; love finds no delight where wrong prevails.</p>	<p>ἐπὶ at <i>preposition + dative (ground/occasion)</i> ἐπί: here 'over, at' — the occasion of the (refused) rejoicing.</p>	<p><b>τῇ</b> the Dative <i>article</i></p>
<p><b>ἀδικία</b> injustice/wrong Dative <i>object of ἐπί (occasion)</i> ἀδικία: 'unrighteousness, injustice'; the opposite of ἀλήθεια here — moral wrong, set against truth.</p>	<p><b>συγχαίρει</b> rejoices with Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · συγχαίρω <i>main verb</i> → <i>gnomic present</i> συγχαίρω: 'rejoice together, congratulate' (σύν + χαίρω); love makes common cause with the truth's gladness.</p>	<p>δὲ but <i>adversative conjunction</i></p>	<p><b>τῇ</b> the Dative <i>article</i></p>
<p><b>ἀληθεία</b> truth Dative <i>dat. of association (with συγχαίρει)</i> ἀλήθεια: 'truth'; nearly personified — truth as a companion in whose triumph love delights.</p>			

7 πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει.

it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

FOURFOLD POSITIVE SUMMARY **ASYNDETON** The central panel closes with a fourfold, rhythmic 'all things' (πάντα anaphora): love covers, trusts, hopes, perseveres without limit. The sweeping πάντα answers the earlier negations with positive, unconditioned generosity.

## πάντα

all things

Accusative

*accusative of respect / direct object*

πᾶς: 'all'; the anaphoric πάντα ('in all things, all things') opens each of the four clauses — sweeping, unqualified.

## στέγει

bears/covers

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · στέγω

*main verb*

→ gnomic present

στέγω: 'cover, hold off, bear up under' (from στέγη, 'roof'); either 'covers in silence' or 'endures' — love shelters rather than exposes.

## πάντα

all things

Accusative

*accusative of respect*

## πιστεύει

believes

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · πιστεύω

*main verb*

→ gnomic present

πιστεύω: 'believe, trust'; love is ready to trust, not cynically suspicious — though not naïvely credulous.

## πάντα

all things

Accusative

*accusative of respect*

## ἐλπίζει

hopes

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · ἐλπίζω

*main verb*

→ gnomic present

ἐλπίζω: 'hope, expect'; love keeps hoping for the best, undefeated by disappointment.

## πάντα

all things

Accusative

*accusative of respect*

## ὑπομένει

endures

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · ὑπομένω

*main verb*

→ gnomic present

ὑπομένω: 'remain under, endure, persevere' (ὑπό + μένω); steadfast perseverance — the climactic note of the four.

8 Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει· εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλῶσσαι, παύσονται· εἴτε γνῶσις, καταργηθήσεται.

Love never fails; but whether there are prophecies, they will be abolished; whether tongues, they will cease; whether knowledge, it will be abolished.

THESIS: PERMANENCE VS. TRANSIENCE ASYNDETON The third movement opens with the thesis — love never falls — set against the gifts that will be rendered obsolete. The εἴτε...εἴτε construction sorts the charisms: prophecy and knowledge 'abolished,' tongues simply 'cease.'

Ἡ

the

Nominative

*article*

ἀγάπη

love

Nominative

*subject*

ἀγάπη: 'love'; the subject of the chapter's great affirmation of permanence.

οὐδέποτε

never

*adverb (time, emphatic negation)*

οὐδέποτε: 'never, at no time'; the absolute temporal negation — love at no point fails.

πίπτει

fails/falls

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · πίπτω

*main verb*

→ *gnomic present*

πίπτω: 'fall'; here 'fall away, collapse, come to an end' — love never lapses or is rendered void.

εἴτε

whether

*correlative conjunction (εἴτε...εἴτε)*

εἴτε: 'whether, if; distributes the cases — 'whether prophecies... whether tongues... whether knowledge.'

δὲ

but

*adversative conjunction (contrast with love)*

προφητεῖαι

prophecies

Nominative

*nominative absolute / topic (suspended)*

προφητεία: 'prophecy'; the highest gift (v.2; ch. 14) — yet itself destined to be set aside.

καταργηθήσονται

they will be abolished

Fut Pass Indic 3 Pl · καταργέω

*main verb*

→ *predictive future*

καταργέω: 'render idle, abolish, do away with' (κατά + ἀργός); the gift will be made inoperative when the complete comes.

εἴτε

whether

*correlative conjunction*

γλῶσσαι

tongues

Nominative

*nominative absolute / topic*

γλῶσσα: 'tongue'; the tongues-gift — notably said to 'cease' (middle), of itself, rather than be abolished.

παύσονται

they will cease

Fut Mid Indic 3 Pl · παύω

*main verb*

→ *predictive future*

παύω: 'stop, cause to cease'; middle 'cease' — the change of verb (vs. καταργέω) is much discussed but may be mere stylistic variation.

εἴτε

whether

*correlative conjunction*

## γνώσις

knowledge

Nominative

*nominative absolute / topic*

γνώσις: 'knowledge'; the prized Corinthian gift (8:1) — also partial and passing.

## καταργηθήσεται

it will be abolished

Fut Pass Indic 3 Sg · καταργέω

*main verb*

→ *predictive future*

καταργέω: 'abolish, do away with'; knowledge too is rendered obsolete by the coming fullness.

## 9 ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν·

For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

GROUND (WHY THE GIFTS PASS) **γὰρ** The reason the gifts are transient: present knowledge and prophecy are partial. The repeated ἐκ μέρους ('in part') sets up the contrast with τὸ τέλειον ('the complete') in v.10.

## ἐκ

in

*preposition + genitive (manner)*

ἐκ: 'out of, from'; in the idiom ἐκ μέρους = 'in part, partially.'

## μέρους

part

Genitive

*object of ἐκ (idiom: 'in part')*

μέρος: 'part, portion'; ἐκ μέρους denotes the fragmentary, incomplete character of present spiritual knowledge.

## γὰρ

for

*explanatory conjunction*

γὰρ: 'for'; grounds the claim that the gifts will be abolished — they are inherently partial.

## γινώσκομεν

we know

Pres Act Indic 1 Pl · γινώσκω

*main verb*

→ *customary present*

γινώσκω: 'know (by experience), come to know'; present knowledge is genuine but incomplete.

καὶ

and

*coordinating conjunction*

ἐκ

in

*preposition + genitive (manner)*

μέρους

part

Genitive

*object of ἐκ (idiom: 'in part')*

προφητεύομεν

we prophesy

Pres Act Indic 1 Pl · προφητεύω

*main verb*

→ customary present

προφητεύω: 'prophesy, speak forth (for God)'; even prophetic revelation is, in this age, only partial.

## 10 ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται.

but when the complete comes, the partial will be abolished.

TEMPORAL CONTRAST (ESCHATOLOGICAL) ὅταν δὲ The decisive turn: when 'the complete' (τὸ τέλειον) arrives, the partial is done away. Whatever the referent — the eschaton, the face-to-face vision of v.12 — the principle is that the partial gives way to the whole.

ὅταν

when

*temporal conjunction (+ subjunctive)*

ὅταν: 'whenever, when' (ὅτε + ἄν); with the subjunctive, an indefinite future time — here the certain but undated arrival.

δὲ

but

*adversative conjunction*

ἔλθῃ

comes

Aor Act Subj 3 Sg · ἔρχομαι

*verb of the temporal clause (subjunctive)*

→ ingressive aorist (arrival)

ἔρχομαι: 'come'; the aorist marks the punctiliar event of the complete's arrival.

τὸ

the

Nominative

*article (substantizes adj.)*

## τέλειον

complete/perfect

Nominative

*substantival adjective (subject)*

τέλειος: 'complete, mature, perfect' (from τέλος, 'end, goal'); the consummate state that supersedes the fragmentary.

## τὸ

the

Nominative

*article (substantizes phrase)*

## ἐκ

in

*preposition + genitive (manner)*

## μέρους

part

Genitive

*object of ἐκ (the substantival 'the partial')*

μέρος: 'part'; τὸ ἐκ μέρους = 'that which is partial' — the present incomplete gifts as a class.

## καταργηθήσεται

will be abolished

Fut Pass Indic 3 Sg · καταργέω

*main verb of the apodosis*

→ predictive future

καταργέω: 'abolish, render obsolete'; the partial is set aside, not because it was false, but because it is surpassed.

11 ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου.

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I have set aside the things of the child.

ILLUSTRATION (ANALOGY OF GROWTH) **ASYNDETON** The first of two analogies for present partial versus future full. Childhood and adulthood: the child's modes of speech, thought, and reasoning are naturally outgrown — so the gifts, fitting for now, are surpassed in the mature state.

ὅτε

when

*temporal conjunction*

ὅτε: 'when'; with the indicative, of definite past time.

ἤμην

I was

Impf Mid Indic 1 Sg · εἰμί

*verb of the temporal clause*

→ imperfect (past state)

εἰμί: 'to be'; the imperfect ἤμην describes the abiding past condition of childhood.

νήπιος

child/infant

Nominative

*predicate nominative*

νήπιος: 'infant, child' (lit. 'non-speaking'); immaturity — Paul has used it of the Corinthians (3:1).

ἐλάλουν

I used to speak

Impf Act Indic 1 Sg · λαλέω

*main verb*

→ customary imperfect (habitual past)

λαλέω: 'speak'; the imperfect of habitual childhood behavior.

ὡς

as

*comparative particle*

ὡς: 'as, like'; introduces the manner appropriate to a child.

νήπιος

a child

Nominative

*predicate of comparison (after ὡς)*

ἐφρόνουν

I used to think

Impf Act Indic 1 Sg · φρονέω

*main verb (asyndeton)*

→ customary imperfect

φρονέω: 'think, set one's mind, have an attitude'; the child's mode of mind.

ὡς

as

*comparative particle*

νήπιος

a child

Nominative

*predicate of comparison*

ἐλογιζόμην

I used to reason

Impf Mid Indic 1 Sg · λογίζομαι

*main verb (asyndeton)*

→ customary imperfect

λογίζομαι: 'reckon, reason, calculate'; the child's manner of reasoning, soon outgrown.

ὡς

as

*comparative particle*

νήπιος

a child

Nominative

*predicate of comparison*

<p><b>ὅτε</b> when <i>temporal conjunction</i></p>	<p><b>γέγονα</b> I have become Perf Act Indic 1 Sg · γίνομαι <i>verb of the temporal clause</i></p> <p>→ <b>intensive perfect (resultant state)</b></p> <p>γίνομαι: 'become'; the perfect marks the abiding adult state now attained.</p>	<p><b>άνηρ</b> a man/adult Nominative <i>predicate nominative</i></p> <p>άνηρ: 'man, adult male'; here the grown man as the figure of maturity over against the νήπιος.</p>	<p><b>κατήρηκα</b> I have set aside Perf Act Indic 1 Sg · καταργέω <i>main verb of the apodosis</i></p> <p>→ <b>intensive perfect (completed with abiding result)</b></p> <p>καταργέω: 'do away with, set aside'; the same verb used of the gifts (vv.8, 10) — childish things are permanently left behind.</p>
<p><b>τὰ</b> the things Accusative <i>article (substantival, neut. pl.)</i></p>	<p><b>τοῦ</b> of the Genitive <i>article</i></p>	<p><b>νηπίου</b> child Genitive <i>possessive genitive (τὰ τοῦ νηπίου = 'the child's ways')</i></p> <p>νήπιος: 'child'; τὰ τοῦ νηπίου = 'childish things, the ways of childhood' — abandoned at maturity.</p>	

**12** βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.

For now we see through a mirror, in a riddle, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully, even as also I have been fully known.

**GROUND / SECOND ILLUSTRATION** **γὰρ** The second analogy and the ground of vv.9–11: now we see indirectly, as in a bronze mirror's dim image; then, face to face. The 'now / then' (ἄρτι / τότε) antithesis crystallizes present partial knowledge against the future full knowing, matched to God's own knowledge of us.

## βλέπομεν

we see

Pres Act Indic 1 Pl · βλέπω

*main verb*

→ customary present

βλέπω: 'see, look'; of present perception, here indirect and obscured.

## γὰρ

for

*explanatory conjunction*

γὰρ: 'for'; grounds the principle of partiality just illustrated.

## ἄρτι

now

*adverb (present time)*

ἄρτι: 'now, just now'; the present age, paired antithetically with τότε ('then').

## δι'

through

*preposition + genitive (means/medium)*

δι': 'through'; the medium of vision — a (reflecting) mirror.

## ἔσοπτρου

a mirror

Genitive

*object of διὰ (means)*

ἔσοπτρον: 'mirror'; ancient mirrors were polished bronze, giving an imperfect, dim reflection — Corinth was famed for its bronze.

## ἐν

in

*preposition + dative (manner)*

ἐν: 'in'; the manner of the seeing — obscure, enigmatic.

## αἰνίγματι

a riddle/obscurely

Dative

*object of ἐν (manner)*

αἰνίγμα: 'riddle, enigma' (cf. 'enigma'); echoes Num 12:8 LXX — present knowledge is indirect, like a riddle.

## τότε

then

*adverb (future time)*

τότε: 'then, at that time'; the future consummation, answering ἄρτι.

## δὲ

but

*adversative conjunction*

## πρόσωπον

face

Accusative

*accusative in idiom (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον)*

πρόσωπον: 'face, countenance'; the Hebraic idiom 'face to face' (cf. Gen 32:30) — direct, unmediated sight.

## πρὸς

to

*preposition + accusative (in the idiom)*

## πρόσωπον

face

Accusative

*object of πρὸς (idiom)*

## ἄρτι

now

*adverb (present time)*

## γινώσκω

I know

Pres Act Indic 1 Sg · γινώσκω

*main verb*

→ customary present

γινώσκω: 'know'; present knowledge — real, but ἐκ μέρους, in part.

## ἐκ

in

*preposition + genitive (manner)*

## μέρους

part

Genitive

*object of ἐκ (idiom: 'in part')*

μέρος: 'part'; the leitmotif of incompleteness from vv.9–10.

τότε

then

*adverb (future time)*

δὲ

but

*adversative conjunction*

ἐπιγνώσομαι

I shall know fully

Fut Mid Indic 1 Sg · ἐπιγινώσκω

*main verb*

→ predictive future

ἐπιγινώσκω: 'know fully, recognize'  
(ἐπί-intensive of γινώσκω); the future  
full knowledge that surpasses the  
present partial.

καθώς

even as

*comparative conjunction*

καθώς: 'just as, even as'; sets my future  
knowing in correspondence to God's  
present knowing of me.

καὶ

also

*adverbial/ascensive conjunction*

ἐπεγνώσθην

I have been fully known

Aor Pass Indic 1 Sg · ἐπιγινώσκω

*main verb (passive: God the implied agent)*

→ constative aorist (divine knowing)

ἐπιγινώσκω: 'know fully'; the divine  
passive — God already knows me  
wholly; my future knowledge will  
answer to his.

### 13 Νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα· μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.

But now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

CONCLUSION (THE ABIDING TRIAD) **Νυνὶ δὲ** The capstone. Against the transient gifts stands the enduring triad — faith, hope, love. The singular verb μένει binds the three as a unity; and among them love is crowned greatest, for it alone belongs fully to the consummated state.

## Νυνὶ

now

*adverb (logical 'now')*

νυνὶ: emphatic form of νῦν, 'now'; likely logical ('as it is, in sum') rather than merely temporal — drawing the conclusion.

## δὲ

but

*transitional/contrastive conjunction*

δέ: 'but, now'; marks the contrast with the vanishing gifts of vv.8–12.

## μένει

abides/remains

Pres Act Indic 3 Sg · μένω

*main verb (singular with compound subject)*

→ *gnomic present (enduring reality)*

μένω: 'remain, abide, endure'; the singular verb unites the triad — they persist where the gifts fail (cf. v.8 πίπτει).

## πίστις

faith

Nominative

*subject (first of the triad)*

πίστις: 'faith, trust'; here saving/abiding faith — first of the enduring three.

## ἐλπίς

hope

Nominative

*subject (coordinate)*

ἐλπίς: 'hope'; confident expectation of the promised good — the second of the triad.

## ἀγάπη

love

Nominative

*subject (coordinate, climactic)*

ἀγάπη: 'love'; named last and then exalted — the chapter's keyword reaches its crown.

## τὰ

the

Nominative

*article*

## τρία

three

Nominative

*apposition to the triad (numeral)*

τρεις: 'three'; τὰ τρία ταῦτα gathers the three into a recognized, enduring set.

## ταῦτα

these

Nominative

*demonstrative (in apposition)*

οὗτος: 'this'; 'these three' — pointing back emphatically to the named triad.

## μείζων

greater/greatest

Nominative

*predicate adjective (comparative for superlative)*

μέγας (compar. μείζων): 'greater'; the comparative used as a superlative — 'the greatest' of the three.

## δὲ

but

*adversative/intensive conjunction*

## τούτων

of these

Genitive

*partitive/comparative genitive*

οὗτος: 'this'; the genitive of comparison — greatest 'among these.'

ἡ

the

Nominative

*article*

ἀγάπη

love

Nominative

*subject (the predicate's referent)*

ἀγάπη: 'love'; the final word of the hymn — supreme because it abides even when faith becomes sight and hope possession.

**On the text.** The Greek follows the standard critical text of 1 Corinthians 13, uniform in its main wording across the modern editions (NA28, SBLGNT, THGNT) and itself an ancient, public-domain text; NA28's distinctively copyrighted critical apparatus is not reproduced. Verse punctuation, paragraphing, and capitalization are editorial and conventional. At v.3 the editions divide between καυχῆσμαι ('that I may boast', read here with NA28/THGNT) and καυθήσομαι/καυθήσωμαι ('that I may be burned'), a famous one-letter variant; the better-attested reading is followed. At v.3 the participle is printed παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσμαι. The chapter is a self-contained unit (the celebrated 'hymn to love'), framed by 12:31b and resumed at 14:1. The syntactic, semantic-force, and discourse tiers are interpretive throughout; where readings legitimately differ, the more common analysis is given.

**On the labels.** Parsing gives Tense·Voice·Mood·Person·Number (+ Case·Number·Gender for participles) and lemma. The *syntactic-function* and **semantic-force** tiers follow standard intermediate-grammar categories (e.g. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*); both involve interpretive judgment, and the majority reading has been chosen where opinions differ. Lexical notes condense commonly cited data (etymology, sense range, synonym contrasts, NT frequency, OT/LXX echoes) and are no substitute for a lexicon.

**On the discourse tier.** Discourse structure operates above the word, so it is shown at the clause/verse level (the connective, the relation it signals, and the role of the clause) and summarized in the chapter outline. Relation labels, any proposed chiasm, and the paragraph divisions reflect a common reading of the argument; other discourse analyses segment and label some relations differently.