

“Love Never Fails”
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

INTRODUCTION: Two Interpretive Issues

1. Cessation

Cessationism is the belief that the miraculous gifts ceased after the era of the Apostles.

2. “the perfect”

A. Canonization of Scripture

Clement of Rome (*Letter to the Corinthians*)
Irenaeus (*Tetramorph*)
Tertullian (Several Writings)
Athanasius (*Easter Letter*)
Council of Carthage 397 A.D.

Problem: Even with the canonization of Scripture, things are not perfect (see v. 12).

B. Jesus Christ

Problem: The Greek word for “perfect” (τέλειος [teleios]) is in the neuter τέλειον [teleion]

C. The Eternal State

The significance of the use of “καταργέω” (“will be done away with” *See verses 8, 10, 11*)

καταργέω (katargeo) 3 Things to know)

1. BDAG (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*)

- To cause something to be unproductive (use up, exhaust, waste)
- To cause something to lose its power or effectiveness (invalidate, make powerless)
- To cause something to come to an end or to be no longer in existence (abolish, wipe out, set aside)
- To cause the release of someone from an obligation (one has nothing more to do with it) (be discharged, be released)

2. Biblos.com

- I make idle (inactive), make of no effect, annul, abolish, bring to naught, (b) I discharge, sever, separate from

3. 27 Occurrences in New Testament

Conclusion – The eternal state is probably the best understanding of “the perfect”

I. Love never fails (v.8a).

Love is the greatest because love never fails.

“fail” πίπτω (pipto)

1. To move relative rapidly in a downward direction.
2. To experience loss of status or condition (fall, be destroyed)

II. Gifts are temporary (vs. 8b-12).

A. Gifts will cease

“cease” παύω (pauo)

- 1. To cause something to stop or keep something from happening (stop, cause to stop, quiet, relieve)
- 2. To cease doing something (stop (oneself), cease)
- 15 Occurrences in New Testament

1 Corinthians 15:23-26

²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴ then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when **He has abolished** all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that **will be abolished** is death.

Romans 6:6

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin **might be done away with**, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin...

Romans 7:6

But now **we have been released** from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and **bring to an end** by the appearance of His coming...

2 Timothy 1:10

but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who **abolished death** and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

Hebrews 2:14-15

¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death **He might render powerless** him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

B. Gifts are partial

“partial” μέρος (meros)

- to a middle position spatially or temporarily (middle, in the middle)
- Pertaining to a position in a group, without focus on mediate position (among)

Matthew 2:22

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned *by God* in a dream, he left for the **regions** of Galilee...

Mark 8:10

And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came **to the district** of Dalmanutha.

John 19:23

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four **parts**, a **part** to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece.

John 21:6

And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right-hand **side** of the boat and you will find *a catch*.” So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

Acts 23:6

But perceiving that one **group** were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul *began* crying out in the Council, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!”

Romans 11:25

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that **a partial** hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

Revelation 16:19

The great city was split into three **parts**, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

1 Corinthians 12:27-28

²⁷ Now you are Christ’s body, and **individually** members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Ephesians 4:16

...from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual **part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

C. Gifts are for the imperfect state

(Lk. 13:7; Jn. 19:23; Rom. 3:3, 31; 6:6; 7:2, 6; 1 Cor. 2:6; 6:16; 10:31; 12:27-28; 14:26; 15:23-26; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:16-17; 2 Thess. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14-15; 8:4-5; Rev. 16:19)

III. Love is the greatest (v. 13).

- A. Love will outlast hope.
- B. Love will outlast faith.

Romans 8:22-25

²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

²⁴ For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees?

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 Corinthians 5:7

...for we walk by faith, not by sight—

Revelation 21:1-4

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

Revelation 22:3-4

³ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads.

(Rom. 8:22-25; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1; Revelation 21:1-4; 22:3-4)

Conclusion Statements:

Love will never FAIL!!!