

*"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." (v. 12)*

I. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHARITY OVER SIGN GIFTS (V. 8)

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

A. CHARITY IS PERMANENT AND ENDURING

- **"Charity never faileth"**
 - To "fail" is to collapse or become ineffective.
 - Charity (God's love active in us) is a Spirit-produced virtue that **builds and serves**—it persists both now and in eternity.

B. THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF SIGN GIFTS

These gifts belonged to the **kingdom "part"** and **coexisted** with Paul's mystery revelation.

- **Prophecies – "They shall fail"**
 - A sign gift under the kingdom program to Israel.
 - Continues alongside the mystery gospel, but will be rendered inoperative once the kingdom "part" is over.
- **Tongues – "They shall cease"**
 - Human languages given as a sign to Israel (1 Cor 14:21–22).
 - Persists so long as the kingdom offer stands, then stops entirely.
- **Knowledge – "It shall vanish away"**
 - Supernaturally imparted insight into unrevealed truth.
 - Remains active while the partial system remains, then disappears when that system ends.

C. EPHESIANS 4:11–13 CORRELATION

"And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints... till we all come in the unity of the faith... unto a perfect man..."

- Gifts were given **until** the Body reached **unity** in faith.
 - It would be impossible to say there is a unity as long as a Galatians 2:7 scenario still exists.
- The "perfect man" (ἄνδρα τέλειον) is the **undivided** Body of Christ—when the kingdom "part" has been done away, when there is no more "Jew first" scenario.

II. THE PARTIAL AND INCOMPLETE NATURE OF EARLY REVELATION (V. 9)

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."

A. PAUL ALREADY POSSESSED THE FULL MYSTERY

- His gospel came **once for all** by aorist revelation (Gal 1:11–12).
- By Jerusalem (Gal 2:2) it was **settled** and distinct.
- The mystery was **fully made known** (Eph 3:3–4) and is **now** manifest (Col 1:25–26).

B. "IN PART" REFLECTS DISPERSION, NOT DEFICIENCY

- **Kingdom gospel** (Jew first, sign-based) still on the table, **alongside** Paul's mystery gospel.

- Believers held **different portions** of truth—Apollos knew only John’s baptism until taught the mystery (Acts 18:24–26). Jews had the **PROPHETIC** part and Gentiles had the **MYSTERY** part.
- Partial knowledge = **divided understanding**, not an undeclared doctrine.

C. COLLECTIVE VS. DISTRIBUTIVE KNOWLEDGE

- **Collective:** the Body had partial insight.
 - This requires that the full mystery had not been made manifest, which is in opposition to Paul’s own testimony.
- **Distributive:** groups of believers lived under a fragment rather than the whole.
 - Supported by 1 Cor 12-14, Rom 12:6, Eph 4:11–13, Gal. 2:7
 - There were still two parts!

III. THE COMING OF THE PERFECT AND THE END OF THE PARTIAL (V. 10)

“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

1. The **“perfect”** = the **unified under one gospel** in its fullness—one Body with **no more divisions**.
2. The **“part”** = the **kingdom program** (Jew first, national promises, sign gifts).
3. **Overlap:** Paul already had the mystery, but the kingdom “part” still operated, so sign gifts remained.
4. **Cessation:** once the kingdom offer was withdrawn, the “in part” ended—and with it, prophecy, tongues, and special knowledge.
5. **Ephesians 4:11–13** confirms: gifts persisted **“till we all come in the unity of the faith... unto a perfect man.”**

IV. FROM CHILDHOOD TO MATURITY (V. 11)

“When I was a child, I spake as a child... but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

- Paul’s personal growth illustrates the church’s transition from **compartmentalized faith** to **corporate** unity.
- The Body moves from **“childish” partitions** (Jew/Gentile programs) to **adult unity** under one gospel.

V. FROM OBSCURITY TO CLARITY (V. 12)

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face...”

- **“Now”** = dim, partial insight (mirror glass).
- **“Then”** = direct, face-to-face understanding—no more division into parts that are separated, but now “face to face.”
- Context: contrasts the **Apostolic era’s divided insight** with the **mature unity** of the one Body.
- Though this is often used to speak about our arrival in heaven, its context is far more about the lack of divisions in the Gospel message.

VI. THE ENDURING TRIAD FOR THE MATURE BODY (V. 13)

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

- **“Now”** = the post-“part” age, where the sign gifts are gone and we operate in unity of faith, hope, and charity.
- **Charity** endures—God’s love at work in the Body, surpassing even faith (which will become sight) and hope (which will be fulfilled).