



The book of Corinthians is in the New Testament. It was written by Paul who was a Jewish Pharisee, who after a dramatic encounter with Christ who was risen from the dead, began preaching Christ in the Jewish Synagogues throughout the Roman world. As a result he is persecuted and nearly killed on a few occasions.

Paul visited Corinth in Greece about 51-52AD. This letter is written afterwards in about 56AD when he wished to deal with some issues that had arisen in the congregation that he had helped form. This letter deals with a fundamental need of all communities, that each have consideration for others.

1 Corinthians 13

(1) Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels¹, and have not charity (*agape*)², I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

(2) And though I have 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.

(3) 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 profits me nothing³.

(4) Charity suffers long, and is kind; charity envies not; charity exalts not itself, is not puffed up,

(5) Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil;

(6) Rejoices not in iniquity⁴, but rejoices in the truth;

(7) Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(8) Charity never fails: but if there be prophecies, they shall fail; if there be tongues, they shall cease; if there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

(9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

(10) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away⁵.

(11) When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

(12) 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 known⁶.

(13) And now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

(King James Version updated with reference to the Greek texts, including minority texts)

1 Angels is an untranslated Greek word meaning 'messengers'.

2 The Greek word *agape*, was translated 'charity', and is now often translated 'love', but benevolence is a better word. It means a love given in a social or moral sense.

3 Charity has come to mean giving things to the poor, but the word originally meant a kind heart.

4 Legal injustice, or moral wrong. This describes a wrong done by law or official public justice.

5 At that time the Bible was being written and many had various abilities given by God, but these were lost when the text of the New Testament Bible was completed (1st century AD).

6 Paul is speaking of Jewish idea of the 'last day' of judgement, where past actions are judged.