

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 13, Greek Text – Westcott-Hort, Interlinear English – G.T. Emery.

Love

ἀγάπη – 'love' is a peculiarly biblical word, and for a great time was thought to exist only in the bible, however, pagan inscriptions have been found, but are rarities. In the OT ἀγάπη was used to describe all forms of love from the carnal to the selfless sacrificial. Thus in Songs of Solomon – 7:7 τί ὠραιώθης καὶ τί ἠδύνθης ἀγάπη ἐν τρυφαῖς σου – How agreeable, and how pleasing, O love, in delights of you. In the NT, however, ἀγάπη has a specific meaning, defined by canon Leon Morris¹ as - . . . *that quality we see on the Cross. It is a love for the utterly unworthy, a love that proceeds from a God who is love. It is a love lavished on others without a thought whether they are worthy or not. It proceeds from the nature of the lover, not from the attractiveness of the beloved.* When St Jerome translated the NT into Latin he considered 'amor' to be unsatisfactory and used the word 'caritas'² from which Wycliffe derived the word 'charity', which went on to be used in the AV. Some time ago Tom Wright, now bishop of Durham, said that neither 'love' nor 'charity' were satisfactory and asked for alternatives. There appears to be no word in English that fully transmits the meaning of ἀγάπη and so I have chosen not to translate it here, other than to transliterate it into the Latin alphabet – agapē.

13

Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω,
If with the tongues of the men I should speak and of the angels, agapē but not I have,
ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἠχῶν ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον.
I should have, I have become brass sounding³ or a cymbal⁴ tinkling.⁵
² κἂν ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα
And if I should have prophecy and may have known the mysteries all
καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν, κἂν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάνειν,
and all the knowledge, and if I should have all the faith so that mountains to remove,
ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι.
agapē but not I should have, nothing I am.
³ κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα μου, κἂν παραδῶ
And if I may give away to feed⁶ all the possessions of me, and if I should give over
τὸ σῶμα μου ἵνα καυχήσωμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.
the body of me that I shall be burned, agapē but not I may have, nothing I am profited.
⁴ Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται,
The agapē long suffering, is kind⁷ the agapē, not jealous, not conceited,⁸ not is puffed up,
⁵ οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,
not behaves improperly,⁹ not it seeks the things of self, not irritable,¹⁰ not counts the evil,
⁶ οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.
not rejoices upon the unrighteousness, rejoices in but the truth;

1 1 Corinthians, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries.

2 See end note.

3 Luke 21:25.

4 κύμβαλον, n.n. cymbal, - only here in the NT.

5 Mk. 5:38.

6 Rom. 12:20.

7 χρηστεύεται, v., be kind, use kindness, present, mid.or pass. dep., indicative, - only here in the NT.

8 περπερεύεται, v., conceited, - present, mid.or pass. dep., indicative, - only here in the NT.

9 1 Corinthians 7:36.

10 Acts 17:16.

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7 πάντα στέγει¹¹, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει.
all things it endures, all things it believes, all things it hopes, all things it abides.

8 Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει· εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλῶσσαι
The agapē never fails, whether but prophecies, they will be annulled; whether tongues
παύσονται· εἴτε γνῶσις καταργηθήσεται.
they will cease, whether knowledge it will be removed.

9 ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν·
Out of part for we know and out of part we prophesy;

¹⁰ ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται.
when but should come the perfect, the out of part will be done away with.

¹¹ ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος,
When I was a little child, I began speaking as a little child, I began understanding as a little child,
ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ,
I began reasoning as a little child; when I have become a man,
κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου.
I have put away the things of the little child.

¹² βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον·
We see for now through a mirror¹² in an enigma, ¹³ then but face unto face;
ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.
now I know out of part, then but I shall fully know as also I was fully known.

¹³ Νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα· μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.
Now and remains faith, hope, agapē, the three these things; greater but of these the agapē.

1 Corinthians 13, Vulgate Version.

1 Si linguis hominum loquar, et angelorum, caritatem autem non habeam, factus sum velut æs sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens.

2 Et si habuero prophetiam, et noverim mysteria omnia, et omnem scientiam: et si habuero omnem fidem ita ut montes transferam, caritatem autem non habuero, nihil sum.

3 Et si distribuero in cibos pauperum omnes facultates meas, et si tradidero corpus meum ita ut ardeam, caritatem autem non habuero, nihil mihi prodest.

4 Caritas patiens est, benigna est. Caritas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur,

5 non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur, non cogitat malum,

6 non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati:

7 omnia suffert, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.

8 Caritas numquam excidit: sive prophetiæ evacuabuntur, sive linguæ cessabunt, sive scientia destruetur.

9 Ex parte enim cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus.

10 Cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est.

11 Cum essem parvulus, loquebar ut parvulus, cogitabam ut parvulus. Quando autem factus sum vir, evacuavi quæ erant parvuli.

12 Videmus nunc per speculum in ænigmate: tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte: tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum.

13 Nunc autem manent fides, spes, caritas, tria hæc: major autem horum est caritas.

11 'covers', 'protects', 'to keep by covering', 'to thatch', and so by keeping off that which threatens – bear, endure, hold out against.

12 James 1:23.

13 At the time mirrors were made of polished bronze which became patinated and so reflected a distorted image, also, what one sees in a mirror is not a reality but a virtual mirror image.