

WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT IS COME

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Published On: Apr. 25, 2025

Last Updated: Nov. 2, 2025

1 Corinthians 13:10 And The Word "Perfect", Allow The Bible To Interpret Itself, Tangents And The Social Network False Teachers, Modern Skewed Understanding Of "Perfect", Original KJV Meaning Of "Perfect", Something Completed Finished Done, Jesus Completed His Task Of Making Salvation Available To Us, Made Complete Through Our Spiritual Rebirth And Resurrection, Christ Was The Firstborn Of The Dead And The Firstfruits Of The Resurrection, A Promise Made To All Christians Since The Time Of Christ, Bible Verses Regarding Our Coming Perfection Resurrection And Transformation, Metamorphosis, Reading List

My dear friends, in 1 Corinthians 13:10, the Apostle Paul writes the following very interesting but somewhat ambiguous verse:

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."
1 Corinthians 13:10, KJV

Exactly what is Paul talking about there? Well, personally, I believe that there is actually a deeper meaning in this verse -- particularly in that word "perfect" -- than what some Christians may possibly grasp. As some of my longtime readers will know, I am a strong believer in allowing the Holy Scriptures to interpret themselves as much as possible. Simply carefully and prayerfully compare verse with verse, and then allow Scripture to interpret itself and reveal its true and wonderful meaning.

After all, once we start relying on our own carnal, human wisdom, and going off on tangents with our own thoughts and personal theories, we can easily end up all over the place, and still be wrong. I mean we can really make a mess out of things if we are not careful, right? If you doubt that this is so, then you must not be a regular visitor to the social networks, because they are literally filled with nonsense which has been posted by misguided Christians who really do

not have a clue what they are even talking about. I discuss this topic in articles such as "Facebook False Prophets and Misguided Teachers" and "Please Stop Misinterpreting the Scriptures".

To continue, as I explain in my article called "Striving for Perfection: Are You a Sinless Saint?", the simple reason why some Christians may fail to understand what Paul is actually saying in 1 Corinthians 13:10, is because just as occurred with me quite a few years ago, their personal understanding of that word "perfect" has been rather skewed by the modern definition of the word. We can in fact blame the organized church -- and particularly certain denominations -- in part for this misunderstanding. In other words, for us today, the word "perfect" has basically come to mean that something is without flaw or error. That can mean physically, spiritually or in any other way.

However, it may surprise some of you to know that the fact of the matter is that the way in which the word "perfect" is understood in 1 Corinthians 13:10 by some Christians is very different from how it was understood hundreds of years ago when the King James Version of the Bible was translated into Elizabethan English by theologians under the court of King James. Furthermore, the way the word was understood over 400 years ago in Elizabethan English is a perfect reflection of the Koine Greek word from which "perfect" is derived.

The Apostle Paul actually gives us a clear hint of what he means by providing us with an interesting contrast. However, you may miss it if you are not paying close attention. You see, the hint in that verse is found in the contrast between "perfect" and "in part". In other words, "perfect" here is the OPPOSITE of "in part". In other words, "perfect" here actually means to be complete, and NOT just in part. It is something that is done and finished. It is complete. It is lacking nothing. If you doubt that this is so, then please know that the Koine Greek word that is translated here as "perfect" is "teleios", which precisely means the following according to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon:

----- Begin Quote -----

1. brought to its end
2. finished

3. wanting nothing necessary to completeness

4. to perfect

----- End Quote -----

Now, for those of my readers who may possibly still be in doubt regarding what I've just stated, I ask you to please also consider what Jesus himself said in the following verse which is found in the Gospel of Luke. I will explain its meaning momentarily:

"And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

Luke 13:32, KJV

He shall be perfected? Huh? What? Wait a minute! If Jesus was and is the Son of God, and if He was born by a miracle of the Holy Spirit, how could He not already be perfect in every way? You see, when we apply our modern definition to the word "perfect" it does not make very much sense at all, does it? In fact, I would dare say that it becomes rather confusing. Well, my friends, there is no need to get bent out of shape over this issue. The confusion evaporates when we examine the original Koine Greek word that's behind the word "perfected" in that verse. It is a different form of the very same Koine Greek verb we discussed a minute ago. It is "teleioo", which Thayer's Greek English Lexicon defines in the following manner:

----- Begin Quote -----

1. to make perfect

2. to complete

3. to carry through completely

4. to accomplish, finish

5. bring to an end

6. to complete (to perfect)

----- End Quote -----

And now we come to the last surprise, which is a verse which many of my readers will no doubt already know and recognize. This verse is found near the end of the Gospel of John, as we see here:

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."
John 19:30, KJV

Again, as you can probably guess by now, the word "finished" in that verse is derived from another form of the very same Koine Greek verb. This time, in this verse it is the word "teleo", which again means the following according to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon:

----- Begin -----

1. to bring to a close
2. to finish
3. to end
4. passed, finished
5. to perform, execute, complete, fulfil

----- End Quote -----

In short, my friends, Jesus completed, finished, fulfilled and ended His task. He perfected it. He fulfilled everything that was written about Him in the Law and the Prophets. In other words, Jesus provided the perfect Sacrifice for sin, and met the full requirements of the Law, so that we became His purchased possessions through our faith in Him. Thus Jesus likewise said as follows in the Gospel of Luke:

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."
Luke 24:44, KJV

But that is not all, my friends, because Jesus Himself was also perfected, or made complete, three days later when He rose from the dead, and in fact became the Firstborn of the Dead, and the Firstfruits of the Resurrection. However, let

me point out that there was a HUGE difference upon Jesus' resurrection. We are given to believe that Jesus possessed a brand new type of body, which while still being made of flesh and bones, could appear and disappear, and apparently even walk through solid walls, as we see by the following two verses which are also found in the Gospel of Luke:

"And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Luke 24:38-39, KJV

Thus, Jesus became the Firstborn of a new breed of being. As I said a moment ago, He became the Firstfruits of the Resurrection. As some of my readers may know, there exist a number of verses which discuss this very issue. Following are some of them for your personal consideration:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [Jesus] might be THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN."

Romans 8:29, KJV

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, AND BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Corinthians 15:20-23, KJV

"Who is the image of the invisible God, THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE . . . And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:15, 18, KJV

"To the general assembly and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

Hebrews 12:23, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from

our sins in his own blood . . . I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 1:5, 18, KJV

Furthermore, as we all know, that very same promise of being perfected -- that is to say, being made complete with a new type of body -- is given to us as well, just as it was given to the Apostles and Disciples of the First Century. We were given proof that it is indeed real through Jesus' very own resurrection from the dead. Now consider the following two verses which we find in the Apostle Paul's epistle to the brethren at Philippi:

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Philippians 3:20-21, KJV

WOW! Those verses sound very similar to what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13. Let me share that verse with you again:

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

1 Corinthians 13:10, KJV

That is precisely what Paul and the First Century Christians were waiting for and hoping for. In other words, the Lord's return when they too would be perfected and made complete in brand new bodies. We find other verses in the New Testament regarding this hope and expectation, such as the following:

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Romans 8:22-23, KJV

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be

made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming . . . Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

1 Corinthians 15:19-23, 51-52, KJV

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

James 1:18, KJV

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Revelation 14:4, KJV

My dear friends, it should be rather evident to you by now that in a sense, we are merely lowly caterpillars who are now waiting to be perfected and completed! We are waiting for our transformation. God even gave us symbolic examples in nature, such as butterflies, moths, and so many other insects which go through a metamorphosis! They may appear to be temporarily dead, but they are not. They are sleeping and transforming. Now how about THAT! The Lord wanted us to know and understand what also awaits those of us who place our faith and trust in Him. Think about that and rejoice!

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

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